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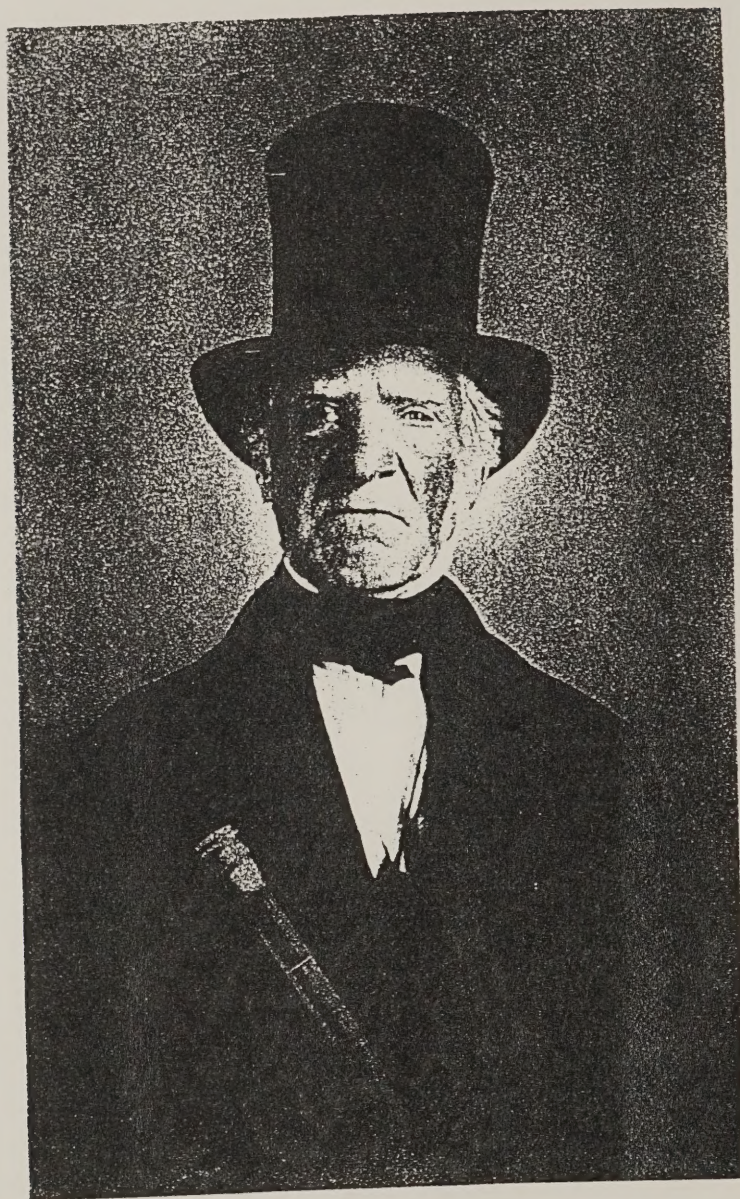
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Sheshbazzar Bentley, Esquire



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# BENTLEYSVILLE

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MIRIAM A. DARTNELL

New Voices Publishing Co.

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## INTRODUCTION

Bentleysville was a rural community of three hundred persons in southwestern Pennsylvania in 1868. It had grown around a mill that Sheshbazzar (the first 'h' is silent) Bentley Junior and Senior operated on the southern branch of Pigeon Creek. Its history is short because as a country village it existed less than a century. This book is a collection of stories, letters, pictures, and facts which have been gathered to preserve its memory. Since 1900, the coal industry has dominated the community and the story of "Bentleyville, Coal Town" is another yet to be written. Documents show that Bentleysville was established in 1816; but for interest's sake, I have gone back to the 1770's to find the very earliest families and to record their names and arrivals. In this research, I have tried to confine myself to the borders of this town; however, in the pioneer years, when specific information is scarce, I have generalized and enlarged the scope. My excuse for emphasizing certain details concerning actions on a national or a state level is that the people about whom I am writing were particularly concerned by them. For example, I have quoted from letters concerning Indian expeditions, from Washington's proclamation about the Whiskey Insurrection and from an account of a Civil War incident.

The events are substantially in chronological order, beginning with the settlers over the mountains in 1750 and ending after the Centennial in 1916. This history is far from complete; I regret that I could not have searched longer through library stacks and newspaper files. If some of these clippings and documents lack sufficient explanation, it is because most of them were found in a trunk or scrap book and that there is no one living who can answer our questions.

Miriam Anna Dartnell.

Bentleyville, Pennsylvania  
November 15, 1954.





## Chapter 1

### FIRST SETTLERS IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA— LIFE ON THE FRONTIER—INDIAN WARS, CIVIL STRIFE AND REVOLUTION

When the first settlers of Western Pennsylvania viewed their future homeland from the last ridge of the Alleghenies, they saw rolling hills under the seeming endless blanket of forest. The tall virgin timber hid the sun from these travelers and made the days short and cool. The black forest was broken only by the courses of creeks and rivers. Its inhabitants were the wild animals and the savage Indians who hunted these animals. The Iroquois ruled over this hunting ground and used the war trails which crossed the western counties. These fearless pioneers, who viewed this forbidding forest, were probably the Browns who were living on Little Jacob's Creek in Fayette County in 1751. Christopher Gist, who was to be Washington's guide, came in 1753, and William Colvin was among those living at Redstone Old Fort (Brownsville) in 1764. They came by foot or on horseback from Virginia over the Mingo Path. They selected sites along the river and traded with the Indians, making friends with individual warriors. Living in Indian territory, they were beyond interference from the colonies and lived by the grace of the Indians.

When William Penn made his treaty with the Indians under the Elm Tree in 1682, he established the precedent of buying from the Indians the land to be settled. Before such a purchase, white men could not legally make "improvements". Pennsylvania was bought from the Indians in thirty-three purchases, many of which were measured in terms of walking and riding. The white men often cheated the Indians by misinterpreting the terms. In one instance, by extreme effort a man walked sixty-one miles in a day and a half and marked off more land than the Indians had been willing to sell. Nevertheless, the proprietors endeavored to keep peace with the Indians. In 1764, by law, the land west of the Monongehela River was Indian hunting ground; but the later pioneers who were moving in from Maryland and Virginia on Braddock's Road, and later the Pennsylvanians coming over the mountains, could not find reasons why they should

not build cabins and hunt in those quiet hills across the river. There were no government officials to stop them, and the Indians were peaceful since Bouquet's expedition into Ohio. The Indians who traded with the settlers even encouraged this illegal movement, but the chiefs however, grumbled when they saw the game being scared away. The governors of Pennsylvania and Virginia, who both claimed this land, wishing to keep peace with the Indians, sent numerous agents and soldiers into the Monongehela country to remove the settlers. Finally in 1768, Governor John Penn sent this proclamation: —

“That if any Person or Persons, settled upon any Lands within the Boundaries of the Province, not purchased of the Indians by the Proprietaries thereof, shall neglect or refuse to remove themselves and Families off and from the same Lands, within the Space of Thirty Days after he or they shall be required so to do . . . . . being thereof legally convicted by their own confession or the Verdict of a Jury, shall suffer death without the Benefit of Clergy.”<sup>1</sup>

The proclamation was read at Redstone to the offenders in April of 1768 and some prepared to leave, but more held out expecting a treaty with the Indians. In that same month, a council was held with the Indians at Fort Pitt to confer upon the recent murder of several Indians and the settlement on Indian land. The Six Nations (Iroquois), and the Delawares, Shawnees, Munsies, Mohicans, and Wyandots sent 1,103 warriors including 43 chiefs to meet George Croghan, the deputy Indian agent, and the state commissioners. The Indians complained about the settlers driving away their game and camping on their war paths. However, even though they complained, the Indians would not send representatives with the colony agents to these “poachers”. The Indians were expecting a treaty by which the Indian title would be purchased, and they did not want the ill-will of the settlers; and that same year at Fort Stanwix, New York, the proprietors of Pennsylvania bought all of what is now Washington, Greene, Fayette, and Westmoreland Counties and those parts of Allegheny and Beaver south of the Ohio.

“The result was that the settlers, chiefly from Virginia, were not removed from the homes they had established in the then wilderness of Monongahela valley; nor did any of them suffer the death penalty provided by a timid Assembly, if such had been the case there might have been a less number of the Linns, the Colvins, the Teagardens, the Browns, the Rodgers, the Swartses, the Martins, the Harrisons within and near the bounds of Washington County than we have at present.”<sup>1</sup>



On February 26, 1769, a notice was given that the land office would receive applications for land within the new purchase at the rate of 5 pounds sterling per 100 acres, and no person could have more than 300 acres. Pennsylvania, however, was not the only party granting land in this new territory. As early as 1754 the Colony of Virginia had been interested in building a fort to protect her trading interests in the Ohio valley, at the point between the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. It had been the Virginians who fought the French and Indians to keep the French out of the Ohio valley. The founders who came on horseback over Braddock's road were chiefly from Virginia and Maryland and had patents for their land from Virginia. It was inevitable in 1771 when the authorities of Bedford County, Pennsylvania attempted to collect taxes, that they would be rebuffed. These settlers, the majority being Scotch-Irish, had pioneered this wilderness to escape the reach of tax collectors and enjoyed a community without the "inconvenience" of formal government. These "pioneer fathers" signed pacts that they would resist all executives of the law. The boundary controversy made it possible to make such denials. In 1767, the English surveyors, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, had surveyed the southern border of Pennsylvania to a point on Dunkard Creek where their Indian guides told them that the Six Nations said they could go no farther. The Indians were apprehensive in regard to the results of their gazing into the heavens and measuring the earth. Therefore, when the party came to a war trail they were stopped. Thus, the southwestern corner of Pennsylvania was not marked and her western boundary was uncertain.

The Monongahela valley with its virgin soil, was attracting a great number of immigrants, who settled first along the river and later along the creeks. The first families to settle on the southern branch of Pigeon Creek were probably the Colvins and Newkirks, but they were soon joined by others. Having built a cabin and having cleared enough land to plant a field of corn, this being called an "improvement," they would receive from Virginia four hundred acres at eight shillings per hundred acres, the colony of Virginia being more generous than Pennsylvania. Settling a new country in the vicinity of an old one is not difficult because supplies are obtainable; but these people who carved their homes out of a forest in country which was beyond those supplies, found an arduous task which tested a man's resourcefulness and required all of his energy to survive.

Since wagons could not cross the mountains without great difficulty, the new settlers could not import the furniture and household articles to which they were accustomed in the East.

Furniture was created from split logs. Tableware included a few pewter dishes, plates, and spoons; the deficit made up by wooden bowls, trenchers, and noggins, and for want of these, gourds or hard shelled squashes. When the new settlers' Eastern clothes wore out, they were obliged to take up the dress of the frontiersman if they hadn't already done so for convenience sake. On the frontiers, the dress of the hunter was partly Indian and partly that of civilized nations. The hunting shirt was universally worn; it was a loose garment and hung half way down the thighs. The coat hung to the knees and overlapped in the front a foot or more. The belt, tied in the back, besides holding the coat together, also suspended the tomahawk on the right side and the sheath for the scalping knife on the left side. The fold in the bosom of the coat served as a pouch for food, small game or gun supplies. The hunting shirt and jacket were generally linsey, sometimes, coarse linen, dressed deer skins. These last were very cold and uncomfortable in wet weather. A pair of drawers or breeches and leggings covered the legs and moccasins were worn for shoes. The moccasins were made of a single piece of dressed deer skin with a gathering seam along the top of the foot and a plain seam from the bottom of the heel to the ankle. Flaps were left, which reached up the leg and these were bound to the leg by thongs to make the moccasin tight from gravel, snow and dust. In cold weather, they were stuffed with deer's hair or dry leaves. In wet weather they became spongy and wearing them was "a decent way of going barefooted". In the later years of Indian warfare, the young men adopted the Indian breech clouts and leggings which hung by strings from the belt. The women wore linsey petticoats and bed gowns and for decoration a kerchief around the neck. In summer they went barefoot, and in cold weather they wore moccasins or shoepacks. The coats and bed gowns of the women as well as the hunting shirts hung on full display on pegs around the cabin. They served as wall decorations and as an indication to strangers of the family's wealth or poverty.<sup>3</sup>

In the fall, after seeding time, families would form an association for starting a caravan to barter for salt and iron in the East. A master driver was selected and several young men to assist him. Horses were outfitted with pack saddles and had bells about their necks. The bags which they were to use for salt were filled with feed for the horses and feed was left along the way to support the return of the caravan. The barter for salt and iron was first made at Baltimore, but later on, towns farther inland became exchange points.



The ten years of rapid settlement following the French and Indian War were relatively free of Indian skirmishes and massacre, but in 1774 a period of bloodshed erupted that was to last twenty years. The frontier had become a haven for the riff-raff of both civilizations and their irresponsible actions often set off a chain reaction of murder and plunder. The earlier Indian wars had not dissuaded the Indians from future attacks on white hunters, especially those found in the Ohio region. The restlessness in the Ohio country came to a head when white men murdered the family of Chief Logan, and the Indians took the war-path. They terrorized all the settlements west of the Monongahela. Hundreds of families sought refuge across the river and some even crossed the mountains. Those who remained banded together and built forts for their protection. These were built all over Washington and Greene counties, but our histories have no record of any on the branches of Pigeon Creek. Possibly, the Colvins returned to their family home at Redstone during the brief "reign of terror". A peace was won that same year after Lord Dunmore, Governor of Virginia, led Virginia rangers into the Shawnee country. The officers in this war who attained greater fame were George Rodgers Clark, Michael Cresap and William Crawford.

The end of Indian hostilities meant peace on one front, but there was still the border "war" between Virginia and Pennsylvania, and in the East a revolution was fomenting. Resentment against British rule was spreading as a result of high taxes and anti-British radicals like Sam Adam's "Liberty Boys".

The humiliation of Massachusetts after the Boston tea party of 1773 brought the quarreling colonies together to work for a single cause. Petitions and resolutions were written in every colony and rejected by Parliament. A congress of representatives from the separate colonies met to write more resolutions. In April of 1775, the British exchanged shots with the farmers of Lexington and Concord, and the fire was lit. A feeble flame, to be sure, but men like Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and the Adamses nursed it until the idea of independence took hold.

The conservative mind of this time, with good reason, questioned the move for separation from England. America had no means of manufacturing her raw materials; she had been dependent on overseas markets and commerce. The colonies were quarreling among themselves and were not all so anxious to sever relations with England. The majority of Pennsylvanians were against the war and separation from England. The Philadelphia merchants were not anxious to risk their business on a

hazardous venture. It is estimated that two thirds of the Pennsylvanians were Loyalists throughout the war. In the Second Continental Congress, the middle states tried to resist the separation movement. When the first unofficial vote was taken on the Declaration of Independence, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and South Carolina voted "nay". However, on July 2, 1776, Delaware and South Carolina had a majority of radicals present, and Representative Wilson of Pennsylvania changed his vote to make Pennsylvania vote three to two for independence. The official vote was twelve "Ayes". New York's representatives had not received their new instructions, but her vote was guaranteed. Neither New York or any state would stand alone outside the union of colonies. These men signed the document that states:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed".

In the East, while the great American Revolution was gathering momentum, here in the quiet forest the men talked of Indians, hunting, farming, and the boundary controversy. The news of the battle of Lexington was a month reaching the isolated settlements. They were sympathetic, with the revolutionaries, nonetheless; they themselves valuing their freedom so highly. On the same day, May 15, 1775, the Virginian and Pennsylvania adherents held separate patriotic meetings and pledged their aid to colonies suffering under the encroachment of the British. By August, 1775, the first group of volunteers from Monongahela had joined General Washington in the siege of Boston. Capt. Cresap led this group of backwoodsmen, many having served under him during Lord Dunsmore's War. It seems surprising that this sparsely settled country could raise two regiments, but Virginia alone recruited that many men west of the mountains. Because he expected an Indian war, Washington assigned the West Augusta Regiment under Col. William Crawford to man Fort Pitt and the Ohio River.



## Chapter 2

### THE BENTLEYS MIGRATE IN 1777—SETTLERS ON PIGEON CREEK—INDIAN FORAYS—MORAVIAN MASSACRE—CRAWFORD EXPEDITION

Early in the war, from New Castle, Delaware, George and Jane Bentley, with their family, made the long trek to the Monongahela country. George settled down on Little Jacob's Creek (Fayette Co.), but his sons pushed on into the forest beyond the river. Joseph went to Raccoon Creek, Benjamin bought land near Parkinson's ferry (Monongahela), Sheshbazzar and House found the land they wanted farther up Pigeon Creek. The following abstract was taken from the county deed book.

#### Deed Book 1-A-p.278

May 8, 1777 Balser Shillings of Redstone Settlement for 400 pounds paid by Sheshbazzar Bentley of the County of New Castle, a tract containing 3 improvements, containing 1050 acres, except what was set of by abitration for Matthew Laughlin, not to exceed 2 acres, on Pigeon Creek and Pike Run according to a draught made by Dorsey Pentecost.  
Palser Shillings

Witnesses: Ellis Bentley

John Buffington

Recorded June 30, 1784

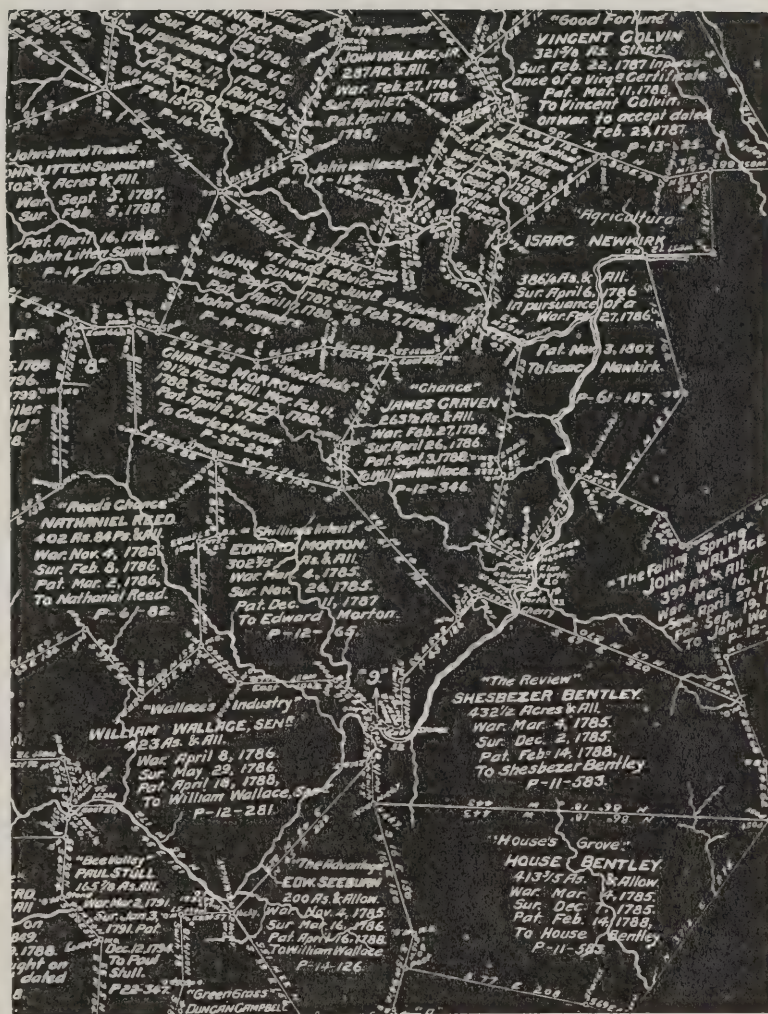
We can only wonder about the people who made the original improvements (possibly Shillings made one) and why they left. Sheshbazzar Bentley would have chosen his tract carefully, because by trade he was a miller. He would be thinking ahead to the time when he could build a mill. It is uncertain as to the location of Sheshbazzar's first home. I have heard that it was a cabin on the hill (Bertovich farm) overlooking the valley. He and Hannah (Baldwin) probably lived in a cabin of the former tenants until a better home could be built. The Newkirk family, down the creek, (Mihalski farm) built a hewed log house that year that was considered a large dwelling. Shesh and House might have attended the "raising" since it was a point of honor to help neighbors at such a time. On the appointed day the neighbors gathered and immediately designated a foreman to oversee the work. He assigned men to various activities—

corner men notched and placed the logs, carriers and lifters carried the logs to the cornermen to notch and lifted them into place, splitters of clapboards for the roof and hewers of puncheons (slabs for floor). This system made it possible to "raise" a cabin in one day. When the walls were of the right height, joists were laid across the front and back walls; and the gables were built at each end with logs, each cut shorter than the previous one, joined to poles which would support the roof. Clapboards were placed on the roof poles in overlapping courses beginning at the eaves, and were held down by logs placed at the proper distances. While the roof was being built, other men worked on the stone-lined fireplace, "chunked" the walls before plastering with mud and making and fitting windows and doors. On the second day the men daubed the chinks, smoothed the floor and cleaned the premises, making ready for the housewarming in the evening. It was understood that everyone was invited and they came early. Dancing was in order and while the fiddler played, young and old joined in. A favorite dance was the Virginia reel. When the fiddler tired, the young people played games—kissing games.<sup>17</sup>

These diversions, however, were few and in themselves were hard work. Pioneer life had little to commend it. Trees had to be felled and stumps burned out to provide fields for farming. Wild animals had to be hunted for meat. The women ground grain, wove cloth, made soap and tended vegetable gardens. The food was plain. "Hog and hominy" was a standard dish, Johnny cake and pone were substitutes for bread. Every family had a "truck patch" where they raised corn, pumpkins, squashes, beans and potatoes besides a small vegetable garden. At supper, milk and mush was the common dish. If milk was scarce, sweetened water, molasses, bear's oil or gravy was used. In the latter part of the summer vegetables could be cooked with the pork, venison and bear meat. Tea and coffee were only "slops", which in the adage of the day "did not stick by the ribs". The idea was that they were designed only for people of quality who did not labor, or for the sick.<sup>3</sup>

There is good reason to believe that Sheshbazzar considered himself a Virginian, his tracts appear to have been Virginia land grants, his neighbor Henry Newkirk took the Virginia oath of allegiance, and Bentley's name is found in Virginia's Youghiogheny County court records as a grand juryman in 1779.<sup>1</sup> What part he took as an Indian fighter is unknown. At home he had the responsibilities as a father to a growing family. A son, House, was born soon after the family's arrival.







The stone farmhouse of Thomas Hopkins which resembles the Wallace mansion. Roy Robison has replaced the barn with a modern dairy.

In 1779 another caravan came to our section of Washington County from Maryland. William Wallace and his bride Elizabeth Hopkins were accompanied by William's brother Nathaniel, cousin Herbert and Herbert's nephew, John Wallace. Elizabeth's three brothers, John, Thomas, and Alexander Hopkins filled out the caravan.<sup>13</sup> They bought land on Pigeon Creek, Pike Run, and Ten Mile Creek. William Wallace chose his home site on a hill not far from the Bentley's. The stone house he built is still occupied (Ellsworth farm) as is a similar stone structure built by the Hopkins on Pike Run (the Roy Robison farm). The two families, Wallace and Hopkins were near enough to be of mutual assistance, and often came to each other's aid.

In the fall of 1777, Indians killed twenty-one men near Fort Henry (Wheeling) and laid siege to that fort. Indian hostilities were even more frequent the next spring. The British on the lake frontier and the white renegades like Simon Girty who deserted from Fort Pitt were the instigators. Earlier in the year, General George Rodgers Clark made himself famous by capturing Vincennes, Kaskaskia and other British posts west of the Wabash. He had recruited his men on the upper Monongahela and had launched his river boats at West Brownsville. During 1778 and 1779, the Continental Congress kept garrisons on the



Indian side of the Ohio, but the scarcity of provisions, to the point of starvation, forced the abandonment of these forts. Again the western country was open to Indian raids, and the hardships endured are testified to in letters written by Col. Brodhead, commandant at Fort Pitt.

April 27, 1780

"I am glad to hear of the four Companies voted to be raised by the authority of the State for the Defense of the frontier, and as I flatter myself the Eastern parts of the State are at present freed from the apprehensions of Danger, so I hope these Companies, when raised, will be ordered to this District, where the enemy are remarkably hostile. Between forty and fifty men, women and children have been killed and taken from what are now called the Counties of Yoghogania, Monongaha and Ohio since the first of March."

May 20, 1780

Dear Sir:

"I find it impossible to procure a sufficient quantity of provisions to subsist the Troops which were intended to be employed on an expedition against the Indians in alliance with Great Britain; therefore you will be pleased to give immediate notice to such as are not warned not to march until you receive further notice from me. In the meantime I shall endeavor to give every possible protection to the settlements and amuse the Indians by speeches."

Sept. 21, 1780

Sir—

"As money is not yet sent to this Department to pay for the Provisions necessary to subsist the Troops, and they have already suffered; and as our endeavor to obtain a temporary supply from the inhabitants upon the credit of the United States have not proved effectual, I am instructed by the hon'ble Board of War prudently to avail myself of a license [to use compulsion] . . . . . You are upon no pretense to take cattle or sheep from the poorer sort of inhabitants, or from such as have been great sufferers by the Enemy; but you are to take them from such as have lived more secure. . . . ."

Oct. 20, 1780

Dear Sir ---

"I have this moment received your favor of yesterday, and am sorry to find the people above Redstone have intentions to raise in arms against you. I believe with you that there are amongst them many Disaffected, and conceive that their past and present conduct will justify you in defending yourself by every means in your power. . . . ."

Dec. 7, 1780

. . . For a long time past I have had two parties, commanded by field-officers, in the country to impress cattle, but their success has been so small that the troops have frequently been without meat for several days together, and as those commands are very expensive, I have now ordered them in."

Dec. 7, 1780

. . . I learn more and more of the disaffection of the inhabitants on this side of the mountains. The king of England's health is often drank in company . . . . . Should the enemy approach this frontier and offer protection, half the inhabitants would join them."<sup>1</sup>

This harassed officer, we are glad to relate was able to make a foray against the Indians the next spring. Below is part of his report to the President of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania.

Dec. 22, 1781

"Sir, ---

In the last letter I had the Honor to address to your Excellency I Mentioned my intention to carry an expedition against the revolted Delaware Towns. I have now the pleasure to inform you that with about three hundred men (nearly half the number Volunteers from the country) I surprised the Towns of Cooshasking (Cashocton) and Indoochare, killed fifteen Warriors and took upwards of twenty old men, women and children. . . . . The Troops experienced great kindness from the Moravian Indians and those at Newcomer's Town, and obtained a sufficient supply of meat and Corn to subsist the men and Horses to the Ohio River."<sup>2</sup>

While Col. Brodhead was on the Muskingum a more formidable expedition was being organized by Virginia to capture Detroit and destroy the Wyandot towns on the Sandusky River. Gen. George Rodgers Clark (he was promoted) was the leader, and he came to the Western country well-financed and prepared to buy provisions and draft troops in the name of Virginia. Gen. Washington and President Reed of the Pennsylvania Council sanctioned the expedition, but Clark had his troubles too. The State of Virginia was accused of making the move to acquire more territory at the expense of Pennsylvania. The people who were anxious to establish Virginia's claim so that they could purchase their land at one-tenth of the price demanded by Pennsylvania, were quite ready to deny her military service. The expedition was doomed to disaster.

Gen. Levine sent this report of Clarke's expedition to General Washington dated Fort Pitt, Dec. 2, 1781.

" . . . Capt. Craig, with the detachment of artillery returned here on the 26th \_\_\_\_ . . . . A Col. Lochry of Westmoreland County, Pa., with about one hundred men in all, composed of volunteers and a company raised by Pennsylvania for the defense of that county, started to join Gen. Clarke, who, it is said, ordered him to unite with him (Clarke) at the mouth of the Miami, up which river it was previously designed to proceed; but the general, having changed his plan left a small party at the Miami with directions to Lochry to follow him to the mouth of the Falls. Sundry accounts agree that this party, and all of Lochry's troops to a man, were waylaid by the Indians and British (for it is said they had artillery), and all killed or taken, not a man escaping, either to join Gen. Clarke or to return home. When Capt. Craig left the general he would not be persuaded but that Lochry with his party had returned home. These misfortunes throw the people of this county into the greatest consternation and almost despair, particularly Westmoreland County; Lochry's party being all the best men of their frontier. At the present they talk of flying early in the spring to the eastern side of the mountains, and are daily flocking to me to inquire what support they may expect."<sup>1</sup>

This year, however, the Indians would not wait for spring, and they made use of some unseasonable weather to make forays against the settlers on Raccoon and Buffalo Creek. Rumors were prevalent that the Moravian Indians were involved in the perpetuation of these raids. These Indians were the converts of Christian missionaries who had come from Moravia in Germany.



They lived in towns on the Muskingum River in the Ohio country and tried to practice the Moravian doctrine of non-violence. These Christian Indians were suspected by both the settlers and the raiding Indians of aiding the enemy and therefore suffered at the hands of both.

The unanimous sentiment in favor of an expedition to bring these Indians under surveillance prompted Col. James Marshel, then county lieutenant of Washington to call out 160 men, nearly all mounted, from the county militia to make such an expedition under Col. David Williamson. Consequently in the first week of March, of 1782, the horsemen crossed the Ohio River at Mingo Bottom and traveled in a direct trail to the Moravian towns. Not far from the river they found the spot where the Indian murderers had impaled the mutilated body of Mrs. Robert Wallace of Racoon Creek. This incensed the men to a point which made it impossible for them to reason that the Christian Indians would not have advertised their guilt in such a way. Full of vengeance they marched on the towns of Gnadenhutten and Salem. The men rounded up the unresisting Indians and placed them in two buildings while others ransacked the houses. The fatal piece of evidence was a dress which Robert Wallace, who accompanied the expedition, recognized as his wife's. The Indians protested that they had bought the dress from Indians passing through the town. Col. Williamson's men urged that they be put to death and he, not willing to turn their wrath on himself, allowed a vote to be taken. Only eighteen brave men voted against the massacre. The Indians, hearing the decision, professed no fear of death because they were Christians, and they spent their last night praying and singing hymns. The next morning, one by one, they were tomahawked and scalped.<sup>1</sup>

When these murderers returned home they received varied greetings. Some county officials demanded an investigation, but nothing was done. There are no records available which list the men who accompanied Col. Williamson or the eighteen men who voted against the slaughter. For the sake of their families, it is just as well. The massacre of the Moravians was followed by even fiercer attacks by Indians which were made near Buffalo Creek. The citizens of Washington County clamored for an expedition against the Sandusky Indian towns. General Irvine at Fort Pitt consented to plan it, and it was suggested that conduct of this volunteer expedition might atone for the slaughter on the Muskingum. Col. William Crawford, who was familiar with the families along Pigeon Creek (he had recently surveyed the Virginia land grants of Vincent Colvin, Noah Williams, Joseph Grable, Benjamin Bentley, and others) was elected commander.

The famous Jonathan Zane was one of the guides. Many local men must have volunteered. The names of Hugh Sprowls, Isaac Vance, Louis Duvall, and James Nicholl are found in the reports for reimbursement for back pay or lost horses. On May 15, 1782, Col. Crawford led his large mounted force swiftly towards the Sandusky plain thinking he would surprise the Indian towns. The Shawnese, however, were watching the force from its start and attacked it on the plains of the Sandusky River. The battle raged for two days and when Col. Crawford retreated with his force nearly intact, the Indians attacked the rear. Col. Crawford, the doctor and several valuable men were captured. Dr. Knight, however, escaped and described in detail the torture and burning at the stake of Col. Crawford.

This defeat, the burning of Col. Crawford and further Indian attacks induced the western counties to move for another expedition that fall, but before the men were mustered the county lieutenant received this message:

Philadelphia, September 28, 1782

"Supreme Executive Council  
In Council

Ordered, That the Lieutenant of the County of Washington be directed to call out no more militia after the expiration of the time of those now in service; his Excellency, George Washington having received intelligence that the British have called in all the savages, and that no more parties are to be permitted to be sent out against the frontiers."<sup>1</sup>

### Chapter 3

#### BENTLEY MILL SITE OF ELECTIONS—SHESHBAZZAR 2ND BORN—VISIONS OF A TOWN IN 1790— FRONTIER SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES— WHISKEY REBELLION—PRESIDENT WASHINGTON ACTS

After the Revolution, as a tribute to her newly won independence, Pennsylvania made a law that abolished slavery in gradual steps. The law required the registering of slaves as a means of determining when and if the slaves should be set free. In the record book of 1782, Shesh Bentley registered only one slave; neighbor Herbert Wallace had twenty. Later, as shown in the Washington County Deed Book 1-A, Mr. Bentley bought more slaves.

Dec. 23, 1784 Samuel Bealer of Wash. Co. Pa. to Sheshbazzar Bentley of Wash. Co. for 100 pounds and 20 gallons of sufficient merchantable Whiskey, a negro woman named Hen and a negro child born of said wench named George

Witnesses: George Bentley  
Peter Johnson

This evidence of slavery in our early history might account for the stone houses which were built when labor was scarce. The dam across Pigeon Creek, the mill-race and grist mill that Mr. Bentley had built by 1787 might have been constructed with slave help. A slave would have little leisure time on the farm or at the mill. The large tracts had to be cleared of trees and stumps and then cultivated. The fields that were plowed raised bumper crops of grain and the grinding in turn kept the mill busy grinding. In this expanding farm community the mill was becoming the center of communication and activity. The miller could describe the temper of the farmers who used his facilities, and he became a natural spokesman for the community.

Shesh Bentley's home was chosen in 1787 as the voting place for the second voting district. The border of the county was by this time completely surveyed, and a compromise between Pennsylvania and Virginia established the present border. Washington county officials took over the Virginia courts, and



Pennsylvania in return honored Virginia land patents. The first election was at Catfish Camp before the county was divided into six districts. The voters who came to the Bentley home to vote came from farms as far as Charleroi and Millsboro.

Neighbor William Wallace was elected Justice of the Peace of "Summerset" Township in 1788; the next year he and Mr. Bentley sought county offices, but came out runners-up. Mr. Wallace lost out to Col. David Williamson of the Moravian Expedition. However, in 1790 Mr. Wallace was elected to be sheriff shortly before the county jail burned down. In 1791 he became a colonel in the county militia; Colonel Wallace had served as a private in the war before coming to Pennsylvania and here he had steadily risen in the ranks of the militia.

Sheshbazzar Junior was born during this period on July 27, 1786. His birthplace was a hewed log cabin on the hill that overlooks the valley (Hillcrest Dairy). Soon he would join his older brothers at the mill, down by the creek. (The site of the first mill is not definitely known but possibly it was on the site of the mill that was torn down in 1914, across the creek from the Roosevelt Theatre). There Shesh (the first "h" is silent) could listen to the men discussing politics and farming. At the mill he could see all the men in the neighborhood and study their manners. His best lessons were probably learned there. Shesh attended subscription schools and learned the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but you will see from his letters and papers that his formal education was incomplete. His training in his father's business was more complete and as a business man he was noted for his shrewdness.

The farmers along the southern branch of Pigeon Creek were far from a village and felt the need of a central community. Some farmers would be thinking of the time when they could retire and leave the farm to their sons. In their old age they would want to live closer to their friends. Others would consider the convenience of a resident doctor and minister, a convenient school and store or a tavern. Encouraged by his neighbors, Shesh Bentley, Sr. wrote this document which has been preserved by his descendants (daughters of Charles Stephens).

"Washington County Somerset Township the Second Day of (February) 1790. Whereas it is concluded upon by a Majority of the Neighbors, and others that a Country Village or Town would be of the Highest Emportance and Particular Benefit, as well to the Adjacent Residenters of the Settlement as to the Community at Large—Being Situate upon Part of a Tract of Land belonging to Mr. Bentley, Joining the Road that winds

from said Bentley's Mill to Catfish and the Road from said Mill to the Mouth of Pigeon Creek—And in Consideration, of said application of Said People, the Said Subscriber Do ( ? ) Sell and Grant unto the people the Said Required Seat of a Town in Manner and form as follows, Viz. At this present time to Convey and Sell unto them by lotts of 60 feet front and 180 in Depth, at the Rate of thirty Shillings Purchase for each lott, and three Shils yearly Rent for Each lott, the said purchasers to build at their Pleasure agreed upon and Concluded by me the Day and Year above Written ---

Sheshbazzar Bentley"

On the back of this document are listed the neighbors who rented these lots. Since there are only twenty-six lots indicated, we can presume that these numbers do not correspond with the present lot numbers. In the present system, lots one to twenty-two are on the same side of the street.

David Smith	21 - 22	George Hull	16
Joseph Ludlon	2	Nathaniel Red	12
Daniel (Carrol?)	5	Sheshbazzar Bentley	1
John Rigg	3	James Dorson (?)	11
John Wallace	20	Joseph Morton	13
Charles Morrow	24	John Walles (?)	6
John Hull	25	Ephrum Wilson	14

The benefits of a country village can be partly realized if we examine the subscription schools that were attended by these farmers' sons. The locations of early schools in this community are not known, and we can only make a supposition that there were any at all. Only the character of the men who lived here make us believe that there were schools as early as 1790. The organization of a school each year depended upon one or several prominent men in the community who had children to educate. This man persuaded his neighbors to be trustees and this group hired a schoolmaster, arranged for his board and room and secured a school house. If an empty cabin was not available, a rough one could be raised in a day's time. These often had dirt floors and students could annoy a teacher by "raising the dust". For light, a log was left out the length of the cabin. The students sat on split log benches, writing desks might be built out from the walls. Textbooks were any books that the family might own, the fortunate student had a primer. The schoolmaster could have been an itinerant teacher or he might have been chosen from the neighborhood because he possessed physical strength and courage and the limited literary requirements. Often these men had no

Washington County, Vermont Town of the  
 Second Day of Feb<sup>y</sup> 1790. Whereas it is concluded  
 upon by a Majority of the Freeholders, & others,  
 that a Country Village, or Town would be  
 of the Highest Importance, and Particular  
 Benefit, as well to the Adjacent Residents of  
 the Settlement as to the Community at Large  
 Being situated upon Part of a Tract of Land  
 Belonging to M<sup>r</sup> Bentley, joining y<sup>e</sup> Road  
 that runs from said Bentley's Mill to Gattys  
 & the Road from said Mill to the North's Region  
 County — (and in Consideration of said applica-  
 tion of said People, who subscribe both Agreements and  
 With the Community in general that the said  
 Subscribers do desire, call and petition to all people  
 the said Request that a Village in hamlet form  
 as follows. 1<sup>st</sup> At their present meeting to convey  
 and sell unto them (the petitioners) a lot front 210 in  
 Depth at the Rate of Sh. 100 per Acre, perhaps for  
 Cash 100, and three 100 for Cash 100, the  
 said Purchasers to build at their Pleasure upon  
 and conclude by the 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Apr<sup>il</sup> 1790  
 As witness my hand  
 S<sup>th</sup> Bentley Esq<sup>r</sup> in Cash lot to be the  
 Head of the Town

A move to establish a country village near Bentley's  
 Mill in 1790. (Written by S. Bentley Sr., notice the  
 "s'es" are like "f's")



more knowledge than what they had learned in a school similar to what they were to teach. All the teacher was expected to do, in most cases, was to keep order and teach the (merest) elements of Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. There was no uniform method of teaching; each schoolmaster developed his own method. Severe discipline was the accepted method used to secure order; each teacher started a new term with a long list of rules and a bundle of well-seasoned rods under his desk. The older boys accepted this as a challenge and a contest began between strength and vigilance on one side and cunning and pluck on the other. An average of ten or twenty whippings a day was not unusual and some boys got one every day as often as they recited.

Because of the lack of a system and the absence of grading and classification, the students were taught individually and each progressed at his own rate. The children learning the alphabet were called upon to recite four to six times a day, but between recitations there was much idle time. Writing was usually confined to the boys since girls had little use for it. The master made quill pens and manufactured the ink from bruised nut-galls, water and rusty nails. Paper was costly and substitutes were birch bark and flat stones. Arithmetic was generally taught but without books. The master dictated "sums" which the students worked on paper or slates. It was the exceptional scholar who advanced beyond the Rule of Three. Geography and Grammar were taught to a limited extent, but they were dull subjects without textbooks. These first children raised on Pigeon Creek were fortunate to receive what instruction they did get. The terms were regulated by the weather and farm schedule. The pupils had to travel long distances on foot and the schools were too cold for the younger children in winter weather. At other times the older students were needed at home. Despite the loosely organized school and limited curriculum subscription schools produced their share of notable citizens. This system made it possible for students of exceptional ability and marked individuality to advance at their own rate and to receive individual attention.

A country village would also mean a convenient church. Itinerant preachers had been traveling over the county for a dozen years or more but there were only a few churches. These preachers of the gospel held their services in the homes and in time were able to organize congregations. The pioneer in our community was John McMillan, the first minister west of the Monongahela; he organized a Presbyterian Church in the North Branch of Pigeon Creek in 1775. The shortage of clergymen

made it necessary for each minister to travel extensively over the county, preaching in every home he visited; and we may presume that Brother McMillan was a familiar figure to farmers in Pigeon Creek valley. Methodism was winning many converts in the West. There is evidence that makes me believe a Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1784, and it still exists as the Newkirk Methodist Church. Many of the English settlers and probably the Bentleys had been members of the Church of England, but their church was not far-sighted enough to send missionaries into the back country and thus lost its members to more active denominations. A missionary we should not forget, and who we can believe visited our valley or sent his message here was Johnny "Appleseed". John Chaplin lived near Pittsburgh and from there spread the Gospel and apple trees over the West.<sup>10</sup>

In the Spring and Fall the Presbyterian Church had special communion services which attracted large crowds of people from distant communities. These services were well attended because they were held outdoors and had more comfort than meetings in the church. It was the common belief that in cold weather the congregations should be warmed by the sermon, and there was no fire. When stoves were introduced to these Scotch Irishmen, they created as much controversy as Dr. Watt's hymns and psalms. For the communion service, the congregation sat on logs in a slope that had been cleared of underbrush and small trees. At the foot of the slope there was a roofed platform for the minister and a stand for the precentor. The precentor read out the psalms and hymns line by line for the congregation and led the singing.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the apparent need for a village, the plan was not carried out. Young Sheshbazzar was then a toddler of four, and it was to be through him that the idea was realized. In the meantime these Western farmers tested the authority of their new government and found that it could demand loyalty and obedience. The power of the first President was demonstrated in this distant county that bore his name. The West made its final bid for independence from government in general and excise taxes in particular.

"To resist or elude the excise is one of the hereditary prerogatives of an Irishman, be he Protestant or Catholic. To kill an exciseman has been reckoned among them an ample expiation for a multitude of sins. By every native of the Emerald Isle it is regarded as the most humiliating badge of subjection which England has ever imposed; and if the parents have nothing else to transmit to their posterity, they

bequeath to them unto the third and fourth generations a hatred of excise laws and of all who make or enforce them. Nor was it much better in Scotland."<sup>1</sup>

These farmers who were rapidly populating the Western counties found themselves over-supplied with the grains that had grown so well in the virgin soil. The only markets were on the other side of the mountains, and the trade had to be carried on by means of pack-horses. Horses could only carry four bushels, and the trip took nearly a month. It was probably a Scotchman who figured he could take six times as much grain over the mountains on his horse if the grain was converted into whiskey. This system was so rewarding nearly all the farmers resorted to it. Whiskey became the medium of exchange between East and West; the "old Monongahela" was renowned for its purity. It was the prevailing belief that the climate of our country made it necessary to drink ardent spirits for the preservation of health. The widespread notion that distilled liquors had medicinal virtue of a high order strengthened that belief. Whatever we may think of it in these days, "we all drank" in those, and the traffic in intoxicants was deemed as respectable as any other line of trade.<sup>17</sup>

The first Congress in 1791 under the influence of Alexander Hamilton, then Secretary of the Treasury, passed an excise law imposing a ten to twenty-five cent tax on every gallon; this tax was to help pay off the debts of this new government. Inspection districts were provided by law, and inspectors were appointed to examine the stills and brand their casks.

Young Sheshbazzar heard some heated conversations at his father's mill after the tax law became effective. Mr. Bentley would be concerned about this "obnoxious law"; he had two stills in operation. Farmers paid him in grain, and to get a good return from it, he distilled it into liquor. Mr. Bentley also distilled liquor for neighbors who therefore were also affected by the tax. By calculation, every sixth farmer had a still and each served the neighborhood. These men had fought in the Revolution, and now they considered it a lost cause, since a principle for which they had fought was violated. Resolutions were sent to Congress, but they were refused. Men near Pigeon Creek then waylaid Robert Johnston, Collector for Washington and Allegheny Counties, and he was tarred, feathered and made to promise not to show his face again west of the mountains.

Meetings were held in all the western counties to discuss the dread law, and what to do about it. On August 21-22, 1792, Shesh Bentley and his friend Col. Wallace attended a meeting in Pittsburgh with delegates from all the counties. John Canon



was elected chairman and Albert Gallatin, clerk. Mr. Bentley, Col. Wallace, John Hamilton, Isaac Weaver, and Benjamin Parkinson were some of the men who were on the committee of correspondence. The final resolution written at this meeting was:

"THAT WHEREAS, Some men may be found among us, so far lost to every sense of virtue and all feeling for the distresses of their country as to accept the office of collector, therefore,

RESOLVED, that in future we shall consider such persons as unworthy of our friendship, have no intercourse or dealing with them, withdraw from them every assistance, withhold all the comforts of life which depend upon those duties that as men and fellow-citizens we owe to each other, and upon all occasions treat them with that contempt they deserve, and that it be and it is hereby most earnestly recommended to the people at large to follow the same line of conduct towards them."<sup>1</sup>

The few law-abiding men, who registered their stills, suffered the scorn of their neighbors and often suffered loss of property. Western Pennsylvania had its "Sons of Liberty" organization; a powerful, secret group which terrified the farmers and abused the collectors. They operated under the name of "Tom the Tinker". Tom promised to "fix" the stills and houses of those who complied with the law. Tom advertised the names of these delinquents in the "Pittsburgh Gazette".

The rebellion came to a head when the U. S. marshall asked Gen. Neville, the Chief Inspector of Revenue to help him serve a writ to a neighbor on Peters Creek. The news of this "outrage" prompted Tom's boys to march on Gen. Neville's home and demand his commission. Shots were fired and several "boys" were wounded. This bloodshed aroused the temper of a group of farmers who were at a military meeting at the Mingo Creek meeting house. Major James McFarland marched his men to Neville's home and there became the martyr of the cause from a mortal wound. The General's home was burned to the ground. This action on July 16, 1794 prompted new meetings to be called, and at a gathering on the hill above Parkinson's Ferry (Whiskey Point in Monongahela City) orders were issued to the colonels of all the regiments of Washington, Allegheny, Westmoreland, and Fayette Counties to encamp on Braddock's Field on August 1 with four days rations.

The principal leaders of the rebellion realized that death penalties could be inflicted for treason, therefore they were

anxious to involve the whole western country. Incendiary documents were circulated before each meeting to arouse the people. The insurgents were further enraged by the contents of letters which they stole from the mail; the letters were written by Pittsburgh officials to Federal officers and condemned certain leaders.

The officers of the militia, including Col. Wallace, who received the orders to assemble near Pittsburgh could not ignore them for fear of public sentiment. The citizens of Pittsburgh, alarmed at the possible motive of such an encampment resolved to "march out and join the people on Braddock's Field, as brethren to carry into effect with them, any measures that may seem to them advisable for the common cause". On August 1, not less than 1500 and possibly 2000 men assembled on the famous battle field to devise some plan by which they would free themselves from imaginary wrongs. Many plans were suggested but no definite action was agreed to, except to visit Pittsburgh with a military parade in a show of strength. The citizens of the town received "Major General" David Bradford and his men as guests of the city and suffered only one burnt barn.

Before the next meeting at Parkinson's Ferry, Tom's whiskey boys were busy erecting liberty poles with the words: "Liberty; No Excise; Death to Traitors". At this meeting a committee was appointed to meet a commission from the United States and the State of Pennsylvania. Everyone but Bradford accepted the terms of the commission which were unconditional submission to the laws of the United States and no further violence; and in case of compliance, full and free pardon for all. The vote was to be taken on August 28 at Redstone Old Fort (Brownsville).

The two weeks between these meetings were a period of wildest excitement. Some people proposed the formation of a new state, others resistance to government and others reconciliation. When the vote was taken for submission, no one would vote by standing up or even by writing "yea" or "nay" for fear of reprisal. At last the secretary wrote "yea" and "nay" on a slip of paper and the delegate could tear off and vote with one while destroying the other. The count showed 34 votes for reconciliation and 23 against. This result and a later general vote convinced the commission that there was no general submission. In the counties of Washington, Westmoreland, and Allegheny from 11,000 taxable inhabitants only 2,700 signed the declarations of submission.

Alexander Addison later gave this statement in regard to the Brownsville meeting:

" . . . Mr. Bradford rose and answered and opposed the various arguments used by Mr. Brackenridge and Mr. Galatin, alluded to the revolutions in America and France as models of imitation, and inducements to hope of success in the opposition of these counties to government, stated the capacity of these western counties from their situation as separated from other circumstances, to maintain a successful war against the United States and in a state of separation to obtain and secure all the essential objects and protection, safety and trade."<sup>1</sup>

Hearing that his proclamation of August 7 was rejected, President Washington determined to "crush out the rebellion". On the 25th of September he issued a proclamation which stated:

**"BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

Whereas, From a hope that the combinations against the constitution and laws of the United States in certain of the western counties of Pennsylvania would yield to time and reflection, I thought it sufficient, in the first instance, rather to take measures for the calling forth of the militia, than immediately to embody them, but the moment has now come when the overtures of forgiveness, with no other condition than a submission to law, have been only partially accepted; . . . when, therefore, government is set at defiance, the contest being whether a small portion of the United States shall dictate to the whole Union, and, at the expense of those who desire peace, indulge a desperate ambition.

Now, therefore, I, George Washington, President of the United States in obedience to that high and irresistible duty consigned to me by the Constitution, 'to take care that the laws be faithfully executed', . . . do hereby make known that, with a satisfaction which can be equalled only by the merits of the militia, surrounded with the service from the States of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. I have received intelligence of their patriotic alacrity in obeying the call of the present, . . . is already in motion to the scene of disaffection;"<sup>1</sup>

The approach of this formidable force prompted the standing committee to write resolutions asking for time to prove the loyalty of the majority of citizens. A new spirit swept the western counties; loyal men were emboldened in public to declare their attachment to the Constitution, while the disloyal cowered before the gaze of public indignation. Bradford and a few others, who had the most to fear, fled to the Spanish colonies on the Mississippi.



Delegates hurried to meet the President and Alexander Hamilton who were with the army at Carlisle and declared their fidelity to the Constitution. Washington told them he had resorted to force to show the whole world that a republic could enforce its laws. He also reminded the delegates that their resolutions had not been universally embraced by the offenders; therefore, some "atonement for past offences" had become necessary.

The men who gathered at the Bentley mill during this first week in November made dreadful predictions concerning the intentions of the invading army. The news that General Lee had established headquarters near Parkinson's Ferry was swiftly circulated; every family feared for their lives and possessions. Rumors were heard that men were being made prisoners by the soldiers and that they were abused. One frosty morning before dawn, the troops made arrests in all sections of the county; men were hauled out of their beds and driven to the river where they were imprisoned in unheated cabins. The families of these men long afterwards called this night of November 13th, "the dreadful night". Robert Johnston, the collector, showed his face again on Pigeon Creek and was treated relatively better. A noteworthy incident occurred when he seized the still of David Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton as the gracious host served the Collector a drink of rum that was spiked with enough ginger to make the unfortunate guest unconscious. While Mr. Johnston was in this state, Mr. Hamilton removed his still. The site of this incident still bears a name that reminds us of the coup, "Ginger Hill"; Mr. Bentley's two stills were seized the following day.

That winter, an oath of allegiance was required of these western citizens, and a list of men who took the oath in Somerset Township is recorded in Alfred Creigh's History. The names listed are: James Dawson, Samuel Ferguson, John Greenlee, Thomas Gill, Archibald Blue, John Huffman, James Collams, Allen Olfer, Andrew Ault, Jacob Swagler, Henry McDonough, Samuel Crawford, George McIlvaine, John McIlvaine, James Miller, Grier McIlvaine, Samuel Weir, Frances Keely, Jacob Myers, Henry Hewitt, James Cochran, Wm. McCombs, Patrick McCulloch, Robert McComb, Peter Black, Samuel Shuster, Samuel Moser, Micheal Paker, James Leydy, John Leydy, Benjamin Leydy, William Smith, David Huffman, Martin Huffman, Andrew Smith, John Stevenson, Martin Smith, William Thompson, Robert McFarland, John Chapman, Mathias

Luse, John Vance, John Kinney, James Dickson, Alex. Porter, Andrew Simons, Sheshbazzar Bentley, Henry Newkirk, Robert Crouch, Matthew Myers.<sup>2</sup>

To the credit of Rev. McMillan it should be reported that he refused to serve communion to men who had not taken the oath of allegiance. The men who threatened collectors, burned houses and stole the U. S. mail paid for their crimes with fines and imprisonment.

## Chapter 4

### SHESHAZZAR BENTLEY 2ND, PROPRIETOR OF BENTLEYVILLE—MR. BENTLEY MARRIES AGAIN—MITCHELL BROTHERS— THE VILLAGE CHURCH, SCHOOL AND DOCTOR

The Nineteenth Century brought a new way of life to Western Pennsylvania. Many of the hardships of pioneering had been overcome. Indian stories no longer struck fear into a Mother's heart. Many of the new generation had never seen an Indian. There was no longer the constant struggle for food. The country was taking on the appearance of agricultural prosperity. Local roads were being constructed by means of mutual assistance. Farmers were breaking up the large tracts of land to make farms for the sons who had married. Hannah Bentley had married Tom Richardson, and they settled on a section of her father's large tract that bordered Pike Run Township. Her brothers, George, and House, had married two of Colonel Wallace's daughters, Eleanor and Frances. The colonel gave them land in Carroll Township, and the weddings had been grand affairs at the Wallace "mansion".

Mr. Bentley saw the dawn of the new century, but died the next year at the age of fifty-one. His namesake inherited the home place at the minor age of fifteen. Abraham Fry and William Wallace became his guardians and advisors, and it was they who leased the mill and a house to William and Charles Morrow for one hundred dollars and thirty [bushels] of "flower". James Wherry, who had served as Justice of the Peace for Somerset Township, died this same year.

At the turn of the century a fresh interest in religion spread over the South and West; it is recorded in our histories as "The Great Revival". One communion service at Upper Buffalo attracted ten thousand people. The Sunday School, Prayer Meeting, Missionary Movement (then for the Indians) the crusade against strong drink and the crusade against slavery were left in its wake.

Catfish Camp had taken on the respectable name of Washington and some citizens were beginning to make recommendations



for the improvement of the town. They provoked this sarcastic letter which appeared in the local paper, the Western Telegraph.

"For my part I've lived all my born days, and my posterity before me and my children after me, up to the eyes in mud and never a bit worse for it, and I can't see why other people should think themselves better stuff than me. I loves fun, and at the other end of town, it would sometimes make you die with laughing to see your calico-carcassed, spindle-shanked folks sticking fast in a crossing-place and leaving their shoes behind them.

Tom Stick in the Mud"

In Canonsburg, Reverend John McMillan had established an academy which became Jefferson College in 1802. The student's chief entertainment was debating and literary societies. They discussed; "Is it right to inoculate for small pox?" "Would the state of Pennsylvania be better with or without lawyers?" "Is it right to drink whiskey in a tavern?" "Does marriage weaken the powers of the mind?" "Should capital punishment be inflicted in a well-regulated government?" Students came great distances to attend this college, Stephen Collins Foster being one.

Two of Dr. McMillan's daughters married ministers, Rev. John Watson, the first president of Jefferson College, and Rev. William Morehead, on the same day. In 1802, these young men took sick in different towns on the same day and died on the same day. They are buried in the same grave at the Chartiers Presbyterian Church.

A young man, only twenty-four years old, became a captain of a "troop of horse" in the county in 1809; he was Sheshbazzar Bentley. In this year he married Elizabeth Moore of Washington and made his home in a new stone house (on the present site of Mr. Finlayson's store). This house was an addition to an older log house of unknown history. It may have been the house that was rented to the miller, we know it was the home of Daniel Cook, a later miller. A stone office was added to the other end of the wooden structure for Mr. Bentley to use for his business. This long aggregate structure had three floor levels and two porches. It was heated by wood or "cole" fireplaces which were carefully tended. New fires were started from live coals or torches carried from another fireplace. There was a stable, probably across the road, for horses, several cows and a team of oxen. Tom White says that oxen were the only animals that could haul logs and all the farmers used them. A Dutch oven in the back yard baked the family bread. Not far from the back



"Pilgrim's Rest". The Bentley home as it appeared in 1909, shortly before its destruction. The site is now occupied by Finlayson's 5 & 10.

door was a kitchen garden and a grape arbor. Soon there were children playing in the Bentley's backyard, first Mary then Hannah and Henry.

An idea of the furnishings for a house such as Mr. Bentley's can be recorded because the possessions of Abraham Falkner were listed for his estate in 1812. His widow Elizabeth was married at this time to an Irishman, Hughie Hetherington. The following list preserves the original spelling.

five fether beds  
 fore pillers and two bolsters  
 two pillers  
 one burow and clothing in it  
 five sheets  
 seven Coverlids  
 one trunk  
 eight blankets  
 seven bed quilts  
 one lucking glass  
 six blue China  
 two flatirons and one pare of stilridge  
 one set of curtains  
 six plates one dish and three basons of puter  
 six tin cups  
 one Rone Mare and Colt and Sadle and Bridle  
 fore milk Cows two steers and two heffers  
 one lardge kettle and two pots and gridel  
 one pece of Sowntether  
 two yearling calf

one Roking chere  
six young cattle  
seven Spring calves  
seventeen sheep  
six hogs  
five pare of Beadsteds  
one dresser  
two tables  
one large Kettle  
one Dutch oven  
one three gallen

The late Sheshbazzar Bentley Senior had not left a will, and the estate was not completely settled until 1816 after the death of his widow. A search through old court records show how the estate was finally settled. Mr. Bentley must have brewed a lot of whiskey in order to accumulate an estate of 1,769 acres. On the land grant map 413 acres of this estate were patented by House Bentley, a brother of Shesh Sr. This author could not find out when or how this tract was obtained by the elder Shesh Bentley. The following are abstracts of Washington County Court records made by Mrs. W. A. H. McIlvaine.

Orphans Court Record - Office of Register of Wills  
Vol. 1-B-p.152

November 1802. The petition of House Bentley, eldest son of Sheshbazzar Bentley who died intestate August 5th last seized of 1800 acres or 3 tracts in Somerset Township and Nottingham Township on waters of the Monongahela River. Petitioner asks an inquest to divide the same according to law among the heirs: -

George Bentley  
Hannah Bentley  
Sheshbazzar Bentley  
and the petitioner, House Bentley

Orphans court Record  
Vol. 1-B-p.196

Partion of the Estate of Sheshbazzar Bentley - August 1803  
To eldest son House - land in Nottingham Township containing  
310 A. and 11 A. and grist mill  
To George - 297 A. on the Monongahela River  
ajoining that of House Bentley and a  
river mill 65A.  
To Hannah Bentley - 33 1/4 A. sold by Conrad Weaver to  
S. Bentley  
444 A. surveyed out of home place



14 A. which John Wallace sold to  
 B. Bentley  
 47 3/4 A. to be conveyed by Isaac  
 Newkirk  
 To Sheshbazzar - 402 A. of the home place  
 45 A. adjoining the home place.

At the age of thirty-one, Shesh Bentley attempted to do what his father had failed to do in 1790. When his inheritance was settled in 1816, as proprietor of "Bentleys Ville", he advertised the first sale of lots.

On March 4, 1816, this notice appeared in "The Reporter" at Washington:

"The subscriber informs the public that he has laid out a town on the waters of Pigeon Creek, Somerset Township, Washington County, 25 miles from Pittsburgh, nine from Williamsport, 10 from Brownsville, nine from Fredricktown and 15 from Washington, on the cross roads leading from the above town in a beautiful situation, and surrounded by rich country — There is three wool machines, one grist mill and one saw mill adjacent thereto. Also great abundance of building stone, limestone, and stone coal, which will be given gratis for the use of building for five years. Also four springs of good water running through the town. The lots will be sold at public sale, on Saturday the 16th of March, 1816. The sale to begin at 9 o'clock of said day, and the conditions made known by the proprietor.

Sheshbazzar Bentley"

Among the Bentley papers, was this paper that cited the conditions of the sale. It is as follows:

"The Conditions of the Sale of the Lots of the town of Bentleys Ville is as follows the hiest Bider to be the bier. Aney person bying one Lot only is to pay one half in 6 Months the wrest in 12 Months aney person bying two Lots one half to be paid in 9 Months the wrest in 18 Months aney person bying three Lots or more one half to be paid in one year the wrest in two years by giving there Note when the Sale is over and Said Bentley Doth agree to give free Sonte, Limestone and Stone Cole in the quarreys for the use of Building for the full term of five years from this Date March 16th 1816 and full priviledge of the Spring warter for use of said town and further Doth agree to deduck twen Dollars of the price of each Lot If Built on said Lot a house fit to mufe in in the Course of two years from the above date and further aney

The Conditions of the Sale of the Lots of the Town of  
 Bentley's Mills is as follows The highest Bidder to be the Buyer  
 Any person ~~or persons~~ buying one lot only is to pay one  
 half in 6 Months the amount in 12 Months any person buying  
 two lots one half to be paid in 3 Months the worst in 18 Mo  
 any persons buying three lots or more one half to be paid in  
 one year the worst in two years by giving them Note when  
 the Sale is over and said Bentley hath agree to give a Clear  
 Head at the last payment or when full satisfaction is given  
 for the payments and further to agree to give free stone  
 lime stone and stone calc in the quarries for the use of Bi  
 doing for the full term of five years from this date Mar  
 ch 16<sup>th</sup> 1816 and full privilege of the spring water for the  
 use of said town and further to agree to deduct two Dols  
 of the price of each lot of 50 Dols on said lot a house fit  
 to live in in the space of two years from the date  
 and further any person or persons buying abot or lots and  
 not complian with the above Conditions shall pay 20 per  
 cent out of each Dollar and give up said lot or lots  
 Before the Sale is over the owner Reserves one side  
 in each Lot giving under my hand this 16<sup>th</sup> of  
 March 1816

Sheshbazzar Bentley

With signat to the amount of 20 Dols Sale the above Conditions  
 in said and said without said Bentley agree to let but let  
 on full price

Sheshbazzar Bentley Jr. states the conditions to  
 which the buyer of a lot must agree, written March  
 16, 1816.

person or persons bying a Lot or Lots and not complion with the bove conditions Shall pay 25 per Cent out of each Dollar and give up said Lot or Lots Before the Sale is over the owner Reserves one bide in each Lot giving under my hand this 16th of March 1816

Sheshb Bentley

N.B. If not to the amount of 20 Lots Sold the bove conditions is nol and Void without said Bentley agrees to let it stand in full force."

On the appointed day thirteen of the fifty-four lots were sold. The numbering of the lots is shown in the 1876 map. The "biers" their lots and the price of their lots were thus:

Daniel Mitchell	Lot 15	\$35.00
John Mitchell	Lots 26, 50	\$60.25
Benedict Reynolds	Lots, 2, 3, 44	55.50
William Thompson	Lot 1	55.25
Joseph Morton	Lot 40	57.00
David Mitchell	Lots 52, 53	93.00
David Lash	Lots, 10, 11, 12	84.25

In the following document, William Wallace Jr. agrees to build a house for David Mitchell.

April 14th, 1816

"Article of agreement maid this day between David Mitchell and William Wallace Junr. both of Washington County, Somerset Township, state of Pennsylvania. Witnesseth that the said William Wallace doth agree to build the said Mitchell a Fraim Hous Twenty four by sixteen feet one story high and Finish it off in the Following manner viz. cover and weather board it, put too windors twelve lites in the Front and two in the back, lay too flours, line and seal it with lime and sand and runn up a pair of winding or corner stairs. Wash boards and (?) to be in one room and if the said Mitchell wishes to have a petition he agrees to pay exters, to make one outside pannel door and Frame and one winder For the lower story. the said Wallace is to find all the metearls for the said Hous and to Finish it of in a work-like manner and the said Wallace to have it finished against the First of November next. For which the said Mitchell doth agree to pay the said Wallace the sum of one Hundred sixty five Dollars. Said Wallace is to have a Wagan at one Hundred and ten Dollars. Witness our hands and seals this Day and date above.

Wm. Wallace Jr.

David Mitchell"



David Mitchell had this house built on Lot 52, where the bank now stands. We suppose that Mr. Bentley "deduck"ed a sum from the cost of the lot as a reward for Mr. Mitchell's promptness. This David Mitchell was probably the blacksmith that took a young relative as an apprentice. The indenture that was written for this boy is a testimonial to the educational advantages of the day. It is interesting to learn that even then men acknowledged an individual limit to a man's ability to learn.

"This Indenture done the twentieth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixteen; Between John Mitchell Senior of the one part and David Mitchell of the other part both of Somerset Township Washington County State of Pennsylvania ---

Wit — the said John Mitchell Doth put and by these presents doth bind his son William unto David Mitchell til he is of the age of twenty one years to Larn the Blacksmith trade and said David Mitchell doth agree and by these presente doth bind him self to Larn said aprentis the Blacksmith trade as far as he Nows and said aprentis Abilates will Receive — and further Doth agree to give said aprentis one year Schooling as follows: the first year Six Months the wrest one month out of each year til all is given and further said David Mitchell doth agree to give said Aprentis Suffinsey of Bording and Lodging and Clothing during said term and at the end of said turm doth agree to give said aprentis two Soots (suits) one shal be new of cloth. Whereof we have set our hands and seals the day and year above Riten

Witness present  
Sheshb Bentley  
Samuel Falconer

John Mitchell  
David Mitchell"

Mr. Bentley lost no time in providing the town with a "House of Entertainment". In his later years Sheshbazzar was an earnest prohibitionist, but for a few years after he founded his town, he had a "bar rume" in his house. He was issued a license by the Washington County court on April 25, 1816 which permitted him to "keep a Public House in Somerset Township for the Selling of Rum, Brandy, Beer, Ale, Cyder and all other Spiritous liquors in the House where he now dwells". Mr. Bentley leased the bar to Caleb Leonard in 1819, but soon thereafter Mark Mitchell built a stone house between the Washington road and the Bentley home which was called the Mark Mitchell Tavern. Tired and thirsty travelers who journeyed from the new National Pike through Bentleysville on their way to Pittsburgh could rest

there. A tavern also served meals and kept overnight guests in those days. This building is still standing and providing shelter.

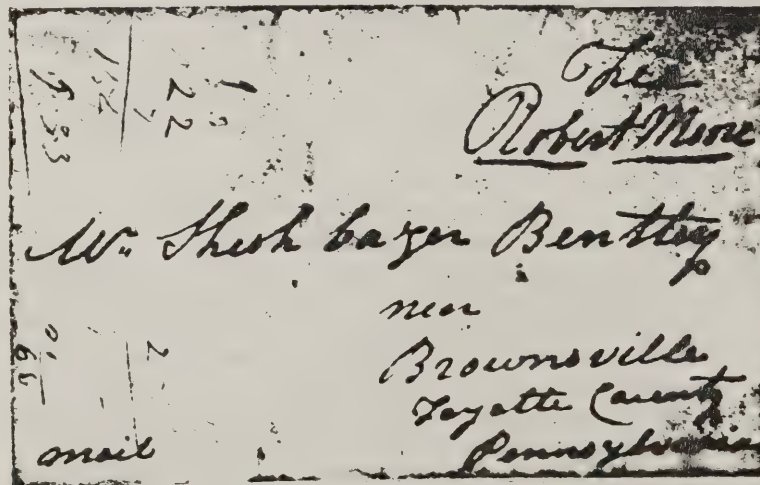
A double tragedy that was all too common in this era, struck the young Bentley family. Elizabeth died on November 23, 1817, a week after birth of Baby Elizabeth. The baby survived less than a month. The mother and child were buried in the family cemetery near the old home on the hill. The old graves were marked with field stone so it is now impossible to determine the exact location of earliest members interred there. The first Mr. Bentley chose this site that gives the modern visitor a wonderful view of the valley.

Robert Moore, a Congressman in our national capital wrote to his brother-in-law about the care of the motherless children. The letter was addressed to "Mr. Sheshbazzar Bentley, near Brownsville Fayette County, Pennsylvania".

Washington City 1st April 1818

Dear Brother

I received your letter and am happy to hear that your children and yourself are in as comfortable a situation as your situation will admit. I hope Little Henry is healthy and thriving -- the little girls I believe are healthy--as I return by Pittsburgh and shall go in the stage--I wish you to be particular to have and procure a modest woman to be your housekeeper where they will not hear base language and



Mr. Bentley's address in 1818 The writer was a congressman and had franking privileges.

immoral conduct for early impressions are lasting. I feel a great interest in the education and welfare of my dear sister's children -- I have no doubt from your prudence you will be careful and my admonition will be well received by you, knowing my motives -- your children are orphans --

Congress will (close) on the 20th of this month I am wearied of Washington, and sigh for home. Write to me in Beaver after you receive this letter. may God direct you to bear your lot, and conduct yourself with satisfaction and pleasure--and enable you to be happy and contented. I am and shall continue to be anxious to frequently hear from you and your children --

With high regard and great respect  
your friend and Brother

Robert Moore\*

It was customary for widows and widowers, especially those with children, to remarry quickly so that the family would be complete and the work properly done. The date of Mr. Bentley's subsequent marriage is unknown, but I should judge the year to be 1818. His choice must have been carefully, if speedily, made; for his second wife, with whom we are more familiar, was a blessing to her family. She was Hannah Cleaver Kenworthy, the young widow of a miller on Fish Pot Run in East Bethlehem Township. Hannah was a Quaker, a member at the Westland Meeting House. The story is told by the family that the Quakers removed her pew from the meeting house when she married outside the church.

The Mitchells, David, Daniel, John (Jack) and Mark, mentioned in the previous papers, were brothers. Mark, John, and David were married to sisters of a Methodist missionary family named Burt. In 1823, two of the sisters, wives of David and Mark, died of typhoid fever. The sisters died so near the same time, the messengers bearing the sad news met while crossing the street. Mrs. David Mitchell left five children; the youngest, David Jr., was two years old. Mrs. Bentley took little David home and raised him. Both widowers remarried twice after this. Brother John came to an untimely death in 1828. I found this document among the Bentley papers.

\*March 3, 1828 This day a Inquisition held over the dead body of John Mitchell Senur which was laying in Pigen Creek near the broad fording when Wm. Niblack, Jr., James Craven, John Freeman, Hiram Freeman, Jacob Burd, Charles Ferker, Mortain Ames, Samuel Davis, Tunis Newkirk, Hugh Hetherington, Henry McDonough and George Pasmore after being



sworn and affirmed the then went on to examing the body of the Deceased and Solomon Wooderd was sworn being the first man to find the deceased and after examing the body of the deceased and the witness that was brought before us we do report that he came by his death by drowning this given under our hand and seals the day and year first above ritten."

Bentleysville had a union church that had been organized in June of 1817. One building served the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist societies on a rotation plan, each society having one Sunday a month. In these agricultural communities, each minister had a series of churches that he preached in on consecutive Sundays. Preachers were so scarce it was common to invite traveling evangelists to preach in the empty pulpits. The church trustees provided for any "irregular" preaching in the original charter which said, "If any dissatisfaction should at any time arise by any irregular preachers being admitted on the fourth or fifth Sundays before mentioned, then the acting Trustees shall endeavor to settle and have power to regulate the same." The trustees who signed the charter in 1817 were H. W. Donough (McDonough), Wm. Thompson, Shesh Bentley, Abner Leonard and John Hipple. They built the church on the James Craven farm and the site was a short way up the Johnson Road. It burned down in 1828. Mrs. Hannah Bentley became a Methodist in 1828, but Mr. Bentley did not join a church until he was fifty-two.

The charter made a provision for schools to use the church building, but none of the memoirs or histories mention a school being held in the church. In Walter Mitchell's "History of Bentleyville" the first school of which he could find evidence was a log house on Pittsburgh Road "near the watering trough". In 1823, Abraham Hetherington (Hughie's son), Richard and Shesh-bazzar Richardson (eldest sons of Tom and Hannah B.), the Niblack boys (family living on what is Gibson Mine property) and Henry Bentley were old enough to go to this school.

Among the Bentley papers, there is a document which gives evidence to a resident doctor in the town; there is, however, no other mention of Doctor Allen in any of the local or county histories. Mr. Bentley had been appointed Justice of the Peace in 1819, and he notarized this agreement between Dr. Allen and his student.

"Articles of Agreement are hereby entered into and concluded upon by and between James Allen Doctor of Medicine of Bentleyville in the County of Washington and State of Pennsylvania of the first part and James A. Crawford Student in

Medicine of the County of Fayette in the state of foresaid of the Second part. WitnSeth that the said parties have agreed to join in partnership and practise the healing art in its Various Branches and in so Doing Each of the parties is to furnish his equal share of stock and Expençe of Everykind and the profits Loses of Every Kind are to be Equally Divided in Just Proportion Between the said parties and it is further agreed that after the firm of the Partnership is fully Ratified on Both sides which firm or title is to be (Allen & Crawford) that no dissolution shall take Place unless by mutual Consent or three Months Notice Being Given by the Party desiring such Disolution to his Partner in Writing. And it is Further Agreed that the said Party of the first Part is to teach and instruct the said Party of the Second Part the Healing art or science according to the best of his skill and understanding for which the said Party of the Second Part is to Pay, the said Party of the first Part One Dollar Per Week in Lawful money of the united states in testimony Whereof the Parties have Hereunto Intercangeably set their hands and affixed their seals this Fifth Day of January 1820

James Allen  
James A. Crawford

Signed sealed and Delivered  
in the Presents of  
Sheshb Bentley\*

Washington County at this early date was producing the wool that has since become internationally noted for its particular qualities. Most of these early farmers had a flock of sheep, though I suppose much of the wool was used at home. There were several woolen mills in the vicinity of Bentleyville. Tom Richardson had a fulling mill on his farm which processed woolen and linen cloth. The machine hammered the material to flatten the fibers and make it more compact. The mill produced felt which could be used in hats and clothing. In the 1830's, Bentleyville boasted a hatter, David Fleming.

By searching through these old papers and histories, we have been able to construct a fairly good picture of Mr. Bentley's town in 1820. An early traveler, such as General Lafayette, who rode through our town on his way to Pittsburgh, would not see much to impress him—a mill, several stone houses and a number of hewed log homes. A closer study would show, indeed, that life was hard and bare. Money was scarce and markets were far

away, but poor farmers were not chained to their farms. If the mortgage came due, the family could move west. This was the land of opportunity, men had the opportunity to plan for a better life and to use their energy and ingenuity to achieve it. It is a characteristic of the American man that he was willing to take a chance. In the next hundred years, we will note the chances he took and the success he had.



## Chapter 5

### SQUIRE BENTLEY—PUBLIC SCHOOLS—NEWKIRK CHURCH— RIVER DAMS AND COAL MINING—BENTLEYSVILLE EXPANDING—METHODISTS BUILD CHURCH

In this period the American man is developing a new type of civilization. The colossal size and richness of the land and the absence of social barriers swept the country into a free-for-all race for money and power. The national motto was "Try". Astor, a fur trader, had become a millionaire twenty times over. Money-making had become a virtue. Rich and poor felt it was their duty to develop the nation. If other virtues conflicted with the making of a million dollars to be added to the capital resources of the nation or the development of land industry, the patriotic virtue out-weighed justice or honesty. Europeans noticed that we walked faster and constantly chewed on tobacco. Men dropped out of society and interest in art and letters became a feminine minor vice. Culture was regarded by the West as effeminate and useless. Boys dreamed of getting rich quickly by lucky speculation. Time was money and could not be wasted on that which would not produce money. Education was limited by the working class that brought it into existence. Public schools were to safeguard economic and political democracy not to develop the individual.<sup>18</sup>

This chapter will be devoted chiefly to progress. In the years between 1830 and 1850 we can see in Bentleysville the effects of great national movements. In 1830 one third of the population or three and a half million people were west of the mountains. The National Pike and Erie Canal had opened the West for the heavy traffic of commerce and migration. These immigrants were Americans who were seeking new opportunities and fleeing from the Eastern depressions.

The vacuum they made was filled by more severely depressed Europeans. In Pennsylvania, in the 1830's the working class initiated a free school movement that stirred up a bitter controversy between the rich and poor. The anti-slavery movement, that was active in this period, was even more bitter. Most Northerners who were fearful of wrecking the Union were willing to ignore the issue and let "sleeping dogs lie". The Southerners

were angered by the Northern manufacturers who employed "sweat shop" labor but opposed the Southern slave economy. The Abolitionists therefore were opposed by Southern and Northern forces alike. The steamboat and railroad caused a major revolution in the field of commerce; this and following chapters will show what citizens of Bentleyville did to advance these movements.

I find it nearly impossible to write a page, without mentioning Mr. Bentley or his family. I have endeavored to write the history of a town, but to many readers it will appear to be a disguised history of the Bentley family. My research has convinced me that in early Bentleyville the two are inseparable. Proof of Mr. Bentley's local influence is partially established when you find these names in local historical records: -- Sheshbazzar Richardson, Sheshbazzar Mitchell, S. Bentley Cook, Sheshbazzar West, Sheshbazzar Stephens and S. B. Crouch. As "proprietor" of Bentleyville and Justice of the Peace for the township, Mr. Bentley was in a position to mould the character of the town. For an example of this, the town became "dry" overnight when Sheshbazzar became convinced that liquor had no useful purpose. He simply bought the Mark Mitchell Tavern and poured the barrels of "spiritous beverage" into the gutter. As the local representative for the law, Mr. Bentley was involved in numerous local scandals, law suits and guardianships. He and James Rainey were overseers of the poor and were responsible for orphans and "bound" children. Aside from his legal duties, Mr. Bentley leased the Bentley Flour and Saw Mill, at least four farms and numerous lots in town. For the people who are interested in old documents, I have copied a few more papers from the Stephen's collection.

"(An agreement made in 1821 between Samuel Nye and Samuel Shuster) Witnesseth, That said Samuel Nye doth agree to give to the said Samuel Shuster immediate possession of the tract of Land on which the said Samuel Nye now lives containing eighty six acres, be the same more or less situate in Fallowfield Township as it now is and to hold and enjoy the rents and profits of the same for and during the natural lives of the said Samuel Nye and Asenath his wife in consideration thereof doth covenant and bind himself to find and provide a comfortable house for the said Samuel Nye and Asenath his wife to live in for and during their natural lives, to find and provide them and each of them with sufficient fire wood to be cut and delivered at the door yearly . . . . and all the necessities of life including clothing, one pint of good old whiskey every day, during their lives. . . . . and all

the apples that grow in the small orchard and lastly the said Shuster covenants and binds himself, that whenever the said Nye or his wife shall be sick and in their opinion a Doctor shall be necessary to attend them or either of them, that the said Shuster shall at his own proper costs and charges procure a Doctor of respectability to attend them while sick and when either Samuel Nye or Asenath his wife should happen to die, they are to be buried at the Meeting House in a decent Christian manner at the expense of the said Shuster . . . . The Shuster is to find a Girl to wait on said Nye and wife during their lives also at his own proper costs and charges. To prevent disputes arising under the article, or if there should be any misunderstanding relative to the provisions of this article the parties now appoint David Mitchell and Shasbazar Bentley to settle all disputes. . . ."

"This Indenture made this twentieth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty between Sheshbazzar Bentley and James Rainey Overseers of the poor of Somerset Township Washington County and State of Pennsylvania of the one part and Jabish Ames of the same county and state aforesaid of the other part Witnesseth that the aforesaid overseers of the poor do bind Arthemor Degarmo a poor child to Jabish Ames by and with the consent of his Mother and with the approbation of two Justice of the peace untill he arrives to the full age of twenty one years, he being now two years one month and eighteen days old all which time his said master he shall faithfully serve his secrets keep his lawful Commands every where readily obey he shall not waist his masters goods nor lend them unlawfully to any at Cards or any other unlawful game he shall not play whereby his said Master may have damage with his own goods or the goods of others he shall not contract matrimony nor commit fornication during said term and the Jabish Ames doth covenant and agree to and with the said Sheshbazzar Bentley and James Rainey, overseers aforesaid to teach or Cause to be taught the said Arthemor the art or mystery of a shoemaker as far as his ability and the said Arthemor's Capacity will admit within the said term and also to procure and provide for the said Arthemor sufficient meat, drink washing lodging and apparel during said term so that he be no wise Chargeable to the township of Somerset or to the inhabitants of the Same and also to Cause the said Arthemor to read the Bible in the english tongue and write and teach or cause him to be taught in Arithmetic as far as the rule of three and when he arrives at the age of twenty-one years the said Ames is to give him two suits of Clothing one which



is to be new and to give him a Bible and for the true performance of all and singular the several matters set forth and specified in this Indenture the said parties have Interchangeably set their hands and seals the day and year first above written

attest

Sheshb Bentley

Solomon Huffman

James Rainey

James Hall Witness to S. B.

Jabish Ames"

"This Indenture Witnesseth that with the Consent and approbation of D Darrosh Andrew Gregg Esq. James Rainey Sheshbazzar Bentley overseers of the poor of Somerset Township in Washington County Pennsylvania doth put or apprentice Lusinda Ann Nye to Joseph Morton and Mary his wife of said Township and County aforesaid to larn housewifery after the manner of an apprentice to serve thim from the date hereof for and during the full end and term of eight years nine months and eight days next ensuing during all which term the apprentice her said master and mistress faithfully shall serve his secrets keep their lawful commands everywhere readily obey she shall do no damage to her said master or mistress she shall not waste her Masters goods nor lend them unlawfully to any with his own goods nor the goods of others without license from her said master or mistress. She shall neither buy nor sell. She shall not absent herself day or night from her said master's service without his leave but in all things behave herself as a faithful apprentice ought to do during the said term and the said master and mistress shall use the utmost of their endeavors to teach or cause to be taught or instructed the said apprentice in the mysteries of housewifery and procure for her sufficient meat and drink apparel and lodging and washing fitting for an apprentice during the said term and give her within the said term one years schooling one half thereof is to be in the last five years of said term and when she is free give her three suts of cloths one of Calico new, one featherbed and beading one Spinningwheel and for the performance of all and singular the covenants and agreements aforesaid the said parties binds themselves each unto the other firmly by there presents in witness whereof the said parties have set their hands and seals May 15th 1829

Henry Conrad  
Thomas Morton, witness  
for Mary Morton

James Rainey  
Shesh b Bentley  
Joseph Morton  
Mary Morton X her mark

Jan. 22nd 1838 It appers that the within named apprentice Lucinda Ann Nye has come to the full age of 18 years and is fully satisfied with the things that she has got therein specified. Witness my hand and seal

Sheshb Bentley  
Richard Morton

Lucinda A. Nye"

Until 1834, the children of Bentleyville attended the local subscription schools. Since we judge the town founders to be conscientious fathers, the schools in Bentleyville were probably better than the average school in this county. This difference would be due to the teacher that was employed. Teachers in the county were ministers, classical scholars and fine teachers or tyrants, unable to write, ignorant of mathematics beyond the "rule of three" and one even gave his students whiskey as a Christmas treat. The written article which the teacher circulated for subscription was his only test of scholarship. Mr. Bentley sent Mary to one of the best girls schools in the state at Bethlehem. Neverthelss, when Mr. Bentley compared Mary's progress with her sister's progress in the local school, he did not find it warranting the added expense. This is the story as we have heard it; but knowing Sheshbazzar to be a thrifty man, I wonder if Hannah's growing family influenced his decision. Added to his first family are Hannah's five children—Sheshbazzar Jr. who died in childhood, and four daughters Susannah, Martha Jane, Lavinia, and Amanda (Nannie).

There were many parents living in this neighborhood who could not afford to send their large families even to subscription schools. The state had a fund for the education of the poor but only for three years. Many fathers would rather have their children illiterate than declare themselves paupers. It was estimated that only one of three children of school age was in school. The people who recognized this illiteracy as a threat to democratic government began to agitate for free public schools. Washington County sent a petition to the General Assembly in 1831 asking for free schools. The exponents of public schools in the legislature began to prepare the way by establishing a school fund and studying the school systems in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. The apparent need for more and better teachers suggested training schools for teachers. In 1834 with surprisingly little opposition an act entitled "An Act to Establish a General System of Education by Common Schools" passed with nearly a unanimous vote. Briefly, the act established each ward, township or borough as a school district and each district was to elect a board of directors. Each district

also had school inspectors who checked the schools and qualification of the teachers. A representative meeting in each district regulated the tax levy. The act was not compulsory; each district could accept or reject the common school.

This victory for the free-school men quickly revealed itself as a false one. When the state legislators went home, they soon rued the day that they voted for the law. The matter of common schools became the most heated and bitterest question in our state's history. In the oldest settled portions of the state, the aristocratic families with old-world ideas of rank and privilege believed that an education would make the poor classes unfit and unhappy in their sphere of life. They would not send their children to common schools with its leveling principle. Then there were those people who opposed all change. Several religious denominations showed strong opposition. The Friends, Lutherans, the Reformed and the Mennonites had their own schools and were not willing to support common schools besides their own or to secularize their schools. The German population of Pennsylvania was particularly opposed to public schools; because they feared that the common school would destroy their children's knowledge of their mother-tongues. "But the bitterest enemies of free schools, those who fought them longest and hardest, were the ignorant, the narrow minded and the penurious. . . . . They argued that the education of the masses was dangerous, and would greatly impoverish if not entirely bankrupt the people; that it was unjust to compel those who had no children to pay for the education of the children of others."<sup>6</sup> Few districts freely accepted the system, but the pecuniary inducements offered by the state persuaded more than half of the districts to accept the law. In many districts, the contest had become so heated, party, church, and family ties were temporarily broken.

A search for records of the voting in Somerset Township and the local reaction to the school tax was futile. County histories tell us that Somerset accepted the act in 1834 and raised \$253.79 from 308 "taxables" in 1835. The school directors, John Vance and Henry McDonough divided the township in ten districts in 1836, but that year Somerset was one of thirteen townships in the County that rejected the school law. In 1837, the act was again complied with and \$500.03 was assessed and collected. A school was soon built in each district and each had long years of service. In Bentleysville a brick school was built on the road that ran along the hill on the east side of the creek.

In the 1835 session of the General Assembly there was a determined effort to repeal the law of 1834 and a leader of the opposition was William Hopkins of this county. William was born



nearby on Tom Hopkins farm in West Pike Run. Had he taken the part of the public school he might still be honored by school children. Instead, it is the speech of Thaddeus Stevens that we still read in part.

"If an elective republic is to endure for any length of time, every elector must have sufficient information, not only to accumulate wealth and take care of his pecuniary concerns, but to direct wisely the Legislatures, the Ambassadors, and the Executive of the nation; . . . This is a sufficient answer to those who deem education a private and not a public duty—who argue that they are willing to educate their children, but not their neighbor's children. . . The barbarous and disgraceful cry, which we hear abroad in some parts of our land, that education makes men rogues', should find no echo within these walls. Those who hold such doctrines anywhere would be the objects of bitter detestation if they were not rather the pitiable subjects of commiseration. For even voluntary fools require our compassion as well as natural idiots."

Unfortunately, the schools produced by this act of the legislature were frequently not all that could be desired. I am indebted to an old resident of Bentleysville, Mr. A. J. Buffington, who was County Superintendent in 1877 and who in his annual report wrote a history of education and a description of these schools.

"After the passage of the law of 1834, the old log-houses began to give place to frame, furnished with box desks and double seats, since in so common use. This change, however, was very gradual, the last log schoolhouse in the county, which was in West Bethlehem, was not supplanted until 1863. The change in the character of the schools was equally slow. The idea of classification began to be adopted to a limited extent. Small blackboards could occasionally be found behind the teacher's desk. Educational meetings were held in at least one township—Somerset. County common school conventions were held, and teachers, as a class, began to have some proper idea of the work they had to do. A prominent teacher who had the best opportunity to know the condition of the schools of any now living, draws this not flattering picture:

'Up to 1848, the system of schools in Washington County was very imperfect. The school-houses were bad. In many places, the barns and sheep-buildings were better than the school-houses, and afforded better shelter to their occupants. The teachers were of a very inferior kind, although in this respect, Washington County enjoyed exceptional advantages

to the greater part of the State, in having two colleges, two female seminaries, and several academies in good working condition, which afforded a better class of teachers than were found elsewhere.

"The school officers were men who were usually narrow, selfish, and shortsighted in everything that related to school management. To all these disadvantages were added a popular ignorance of the management of schools, which greatly impeded the efforts of the best teachers and school officers."<sup>14</sup>

Modern day teachers may get some comfort from knowing that in 1848, in a neighboring township, John Reed, who is described as a fine scholar and an excellent teacher, was discharged from his school because he taught children words before letters, and to read before they could spell. The complaint was "they could walk before they could crawl". This teacher printed his lessons on the floor and was over seventy when he was discharged. Another local teacher who served his race with slight appreciation was Mordecai Hoge. He began to teach in 1814 and continued actively for forty-five years; twenty-nine of these years were at Hoge's Summit, which was named for him. A fellow teacher said that in this locality there never was his superior or his equal. He died a pauper, and a friend marked his grave. Mr. Buffington said, "He needed bread while living; he was given a stone when dead".

If the fact that the school-house was built of brick is surprising, it will be less so when you know that there was a brick kiln near the village on the Pittsburgh Road. Mr. Frank Bertovich recently dug up bits of broken bricks on his property; they are further proof of the existence of a kiln. The advent of brick buildings shows progress in the building of houses. In 1833, Sheshbazzar Richardson, a son of Hannah and Tom, built the first brick house in town. Actually when it was built it was a farmhouse on the outskirts of the village. The town has expanded since that time until it is hard to believe that several homes on our main street were once farm houses. The Richardson home was a show piece until the ornate frame houses were built. It is still a landmark at the corner of Johnson Road, and the home of Mrs. John Wright. There are a few other houses in town that might have originated in John McKenna's kiln. In 1821 Isaac McFeeley built a log house on Main Street that was later enlarged by a brick addition. The present owner, Mr. Donald Darroch, told me that the logs that remain in one wall are like iron. This building is familiar to us as the Sicchitanno Barber Shop, (Lot No. 43). The Methodists built a brick church on land donated by Cyrus Newkirk and William



First brick house built in 1833 for Shesh. B. Richardson. John G. McCormick (in wagon) lived here at the turn of the century.

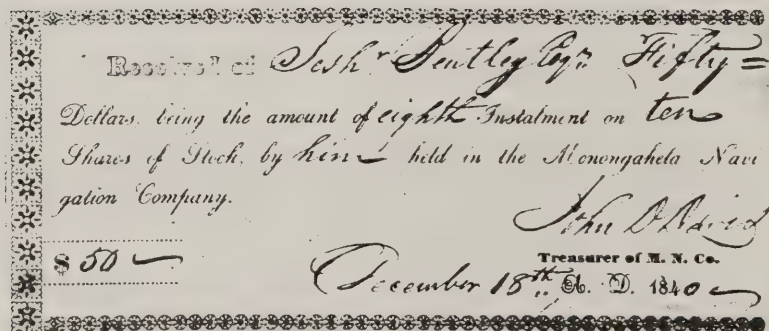
Niblack. The present congregation takes that date, 1836, as their origin. In the course of my research, I found a ticket that makes me believe the Newkirk Church is older than the present members realize. In 1828, the union church burned down and there is no mention of a church in the town for twenty years. The Methodists, at least after 1836, went to the Newkirk Church which then was known as the Pigeon Creek Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1838, the church had a successful revival that is mentioned in Mr. Bentley's obituary:

"During his whole life he had a profound regard for religion, but it was not until January 1838 during a very gracious revival of religion under the labors of Rev. John Spencer and David Cross, that he gave his heart to God and name to the M. E. Church."

The ticket that I mentioned above belonged to his daughter Martha Jane. It is a quarterly ticket for a "Methodist Episcopal Church, Founded A. D. 1784" and was signed by Rev. J. Spencer on May 13, 1848. The evidence seems to indicate that the ticket is for the Newkirk Church and the date 1784 must have some significance.



In the old papers, I also found a receipt for a payment on Monongahela Navigation Company stock. A little digging uncovered this information. In 1836, Mr. Bentley was appointed by the state as a commissioner for the Navigation Co. For forty years the state had been pressed to make the Monongahela River navigable by the formation of slack water dams. At that time, when the river was low, it was impossible to take a keel boat down its course. The provision for the company required that two thousand shares at fifty dollars a share be sold to entitle the company to a charter. Mr. Bentley's job was to sell the stock in this county. He and the other commissioners were successful, especially in Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh was bound to benefit most from this new trade route. The engineers who surveyed the river determined that seven dams of heights between eight and ten feet would make the river navigable. The dams and locks were begun, but before they could be finished the U. S. Bank and the state went broke and were unable to fulfill their part in the financing. For two years the locks that were partially constructed were allowed to rust and decay. Finally in 1844, a group of brave men reorganized the company and finished the four locks between Pittsburgh and Brownsville at a cost of \$418,000. Steamboats began to ply between these towns carrying several hundred thousand travelers from the National Pike and the Baltimore and Ohio R.R. to Pittsburgh and twice as many way passengers before the P.R.R. began competing with them in 1852. The high dams brought money



Mr. Bentley bought shares in the company that constructed the river dams.

to the steamboats and the Navigation Co., but the coal operators suffered under the tolls. There were numerous river mines on the Monongahela that shipped coal on wooden barges. The operators demanded that the tolls be lowered and that the dams be lowered so the barges could jump the dams at high water. They said, "If the high dams are suffered to remain as they are the coal lands up the river will always be worthless!" The dams were not lowered but the tolls were, and the coal industry apparently recovered.

The first mention of coal mining in Bentleysville history, aside from that done by a family for their own use, was in this agreement.

"Article of agreement between Sheshb Richardson of the one part and Cristopher C. Welch of the other part. Witnesseth that the said Richardson doth rent a tenant house on his farm adjoining Bentleysville to the said Welch till the first of April next at the rate of one Dollar and fifty cents per month to be paid in Cole at one dollar and fifty cents per hundred the cole to be dug in this month and the said Richardson doth agree to Let the said Welch dig the Balance of one thousand Bushel of Cole after the rent is taking out at the same rate as we both agree to set our hand and seals this 10th day of December 1857.

Sheshb. Richardson  
C. C. Welch"

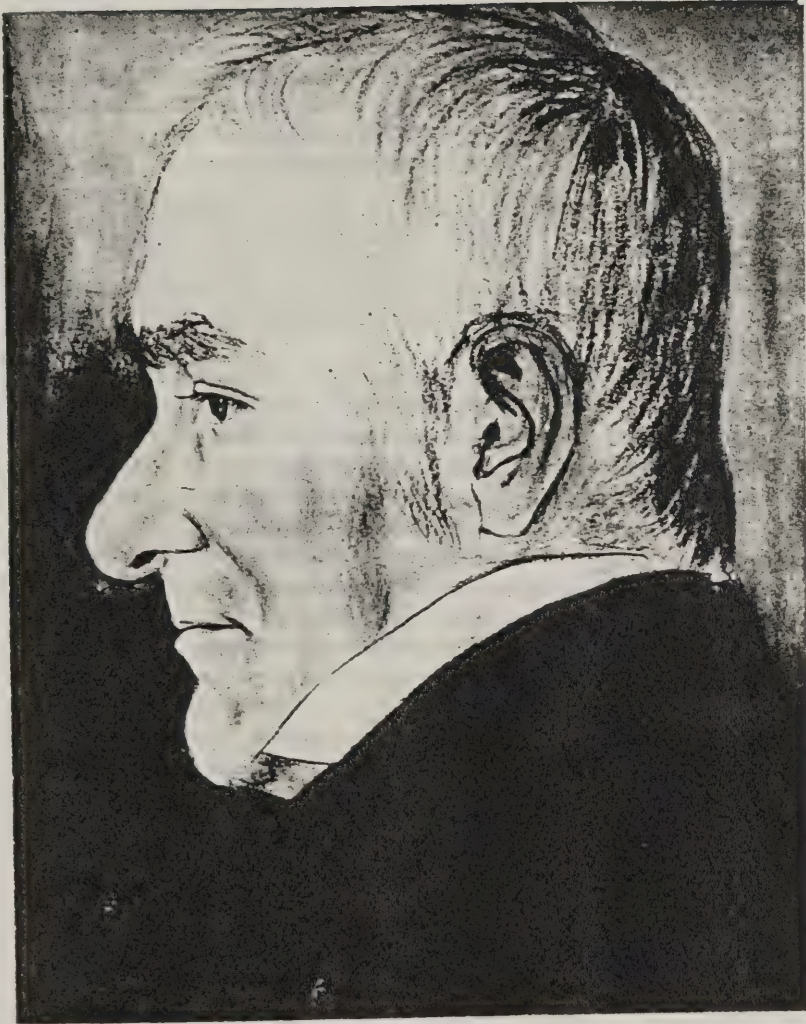
Among the Bentley's business papers there are numerous leases and agreements for the purchase of lots. An abstract of these papers discloses this information: Hugh Hetherington leased a house and lots 16, 17, and 18 in 1827; William Thompson sold lots 1, 2, 3, 24, and 25 to James Messer in 1830; David Fleming bought lots 8 and 9 in 1833; Noah Younker bought lot 26 in 1838 from Mr. Bentley; John Watson, a merchant of Somerset Twp. bought lot 41 in 1838; Samuel Barnet bought lot 52 and the south corner of 48 in 1838; and in 1844 George Morrison sold a frame store house to Isaac Williams for \$.60.00. The leases for the mill were for David Cook prior to 1833, Mark Mitchell in 1835, James Sopher in 1838, Richard Creighton in 1843 and John Auld in 1846.

Family records reveal a number of weddings that directly concern our history. My intention is to introduce at this point new residents in Bentleysville without whose acquaintance it is impossible to understand future events. Also, you will learn why strangers in our town were cautioned about discussing one resident in the presence of another for it was likely that the two

were related. For the first wedding it is necessary to go back to 1830, when Mary Bentley married a promising Pittsburgh merchant William B. Pusey. There is no further record of Mary until 1838 when she returned to her Father's home to die from a lingering illness. Mr. Bentley's late conversion was said to have resulted from Mary's example of consistent Christian life. Mr. Pusey married Jane Holmes the same year and their children were Nathaniel H., Mary W., Ellen H., William B. Jr., George W., and Thomas R. This Pittsburgh family is mentioned because later it was through them that a quantity of Western property was purchased by local residents. Sister Hannah Bentley married a Mr. Fleming, but we know nothing about them. Henry married Sarah Jane Cooper in 1840 and moved to "Riverside" the farm near Monongahela. The stone home in Bentleysville was called, "Pilgrim's Rest".

Susannah Bentley was the first of Hannah Cleaver's daughters to marry, and her choice was Robert N. West, a farmer. Her Father gave them a farm in that part of the Bentley tract nearest Beallsville. Susan and Robert brought eight children into the world but buried their three sons and two daughters before they were grown. Mr. Bentley gave each of Hannah's daughters a farm and the West farm is the only one still owned by a Bentley heir, Harry Richardson. Martha Jane was won by a young businessman from Fayette County. John W. Stephens was a graduate of Allegheny College and was in business with an uncle in Uniontown. Before the Stephens came to their farm on Pigeon Creek, they lived in Allegheny (North Side of Pittsburgh) and operated a store with George W. Pusey. In 1856, their first child Amanda Edmonia ("Eddie") died at the age of four and soon afterwards, the Stephens moved to Bentleysville. George Pusey carefully managed his business and eventually left an estate of two and a half million dollars. John W. became a farmer and village storekeeper. There seems to have been only one store at this time, and it stood on lot 48 near Duvall's Hardware Store. A store house is referred to in the leases and a description of the town in the 1850's makes me think that Sheshbazzar Richardson ran this store before J. W. Stephens. Martha Jane presented her husband with five sons to work the farm and tend the store. Mr. Stephens did not confine his interests to the country life, however, and it was partially because of him that this village earned limited fame. Hannah's third daughter Amanda ("Nannie") married Cyrus Newkirk's son Isaac. Isaac was also a farmer, and his portion of the Bentley tract was west of Main Street and included all the land behind the string of houses that bordered the dirt road down as far as the S. B. Richardson farm (Johnson





Sheshbazzar Bentley II

Road). In 1871 he built a farmhouse next to "Pilgrim's Rest". This house is now owned by John Bentley Greenlee. Before this house was constructed, the Newkirks lived in John Watson's house by the "alley" (Washington St. See page 92).

Lavinia Bentley married a Methodist minister, Peter Fleming Jones, and lived, according to the Methodist custom, several years in Finleyville, Waynesburg, Carmichealtown, Fayette City, Connelssville, Cannonsburg and Monongahela. Reverend Jones suffered from poor health and succumbed to typhoid fever in his fortieth year at this father's home in West Virginia. Lavinia was left with five children to raise; then six months later her youngest child, Homer Simpson died of "Cholera Infantum" at Bentleysville. Peter's brother, Robert L. Jones married Lavinia soon thereafter, and he built the farmhouse on the hill (Hillcrest Dairy), and for obvious reasons they called it "Mount Beauty".

Besides these additions to the Bentley family, the village had attracted a number of businessmen: John Holland, a shoemaker; J. J. Denormandie, a saddler and harness maker; Nellie Jennings, a weaver; and William Sprowls; a huckster, were prominent men and the David Mitchell whom Mrs. Bentley raised was the blacksmith. David was Squire Mitchell and retained his office of Justice of the Peace for many years. His manner of handling his cases won him the title of "Peacemaker". It is claimed that he never had to settle a case in court. Hannah Bentley's Quaker influence might have been a factor in this. In 1855, Dr. John Keys made his residence in the village and practised here five years before moving to Beallsville. It was the custom then for college graduates who wished to study medicine to "read medicine" for a year with an established doctor before going to a one or two year medical school. One of Dr. Keys apprentices, who traveled with him on horseback to help hold down the surgical cases and roll the pills, was his brother Robert Keys. James Gibson, a teacher, also lived in town and is remembered for his devotion to his profession and the results of his labors. His ability to keep an orderly school room and his students busy was so well known, he was often sought to teach at difficult schools.

This increase in the population might be the reason that the local Methodists could separate from the Newkirk Church in 1848 and hold services in the schoolhouse across the creek. In 1852, the trustees, Robert West, Sheshbazzar Richardson and brother Harrison Richardson and John Holland bought a half acre from Squire Bentley and built a brick church near the brick school. Its architecture was similar to the present

Newkirk Church; a brick structure forty by fifty feet in area, without ornamentation and entered by two doors, the right one for the women, the left one for the men. There were two aisles and the center pews were similarly divided for men and women. On each side of the altar were seats for the more vocal members, and these corners were the "Amen Corners". The church was heated by two large coal and wood stoves and lit by oil lamps in chandeliers and wall brackets. The church cost \$1250, a small sum now, but then it was a financial burden. An idea of the value of a dollar is illustrated in this interesting paper.

"We the under Signers feal Sorry of Hearing of the Loss which Rev. John Wright Latly sustained by luseing his horse we agree to pay unto said Whight or order agreeable to our names here unto anexed for him to git another with

Subscriber Names	\$ Cash
Sheshb. Bentley	3.00
Hannah K. Bentley	1.00
Lavinia Bentley	1.00
B. Hinsdilly	.50
Wendel Hoty	.25
Isaac Davis	.50
Mark Mitchell	.50
Geo. W. Newkirk	1.00
Harrison Richardson	.50
Sheshb. Richardson	.50
Cyrus Newkirk	1.00
	<u>\$ 9.75</u>

April 19th 1844 Received this with within amount of Nine Dollars and seventy five cents from Sheshb. Bentley the above date.

John White"



Chapter 6

GOLD RUSH—SLAVE QUESTION—CIVIL WAR—  
RINGGOLD CAVALRY—BENTLEYSVILLE  
IN WAR-TIME—UNION DRAFT—  
ARMISTICE

Betsy Town [California]  
Oct. 8, 1854

Dear Brother, [John W. Stephens]

In Compliance with a request of yours in Sis Hannahs letter requesting me to pen you a few lines, now on Sunday morning finds me at my task you must, Pardon my style of writing as you know I don't profess to be a correct letter writer; & far less here as it is hard to have a settled mind in this land of gold, where the Excitement of gold digging is somewhat similar to Gambling as to day you may be flat broke & to morrow you may make a Strike By which you may make your fortune although the chances are ten to one against you. To begin this letter I shall give you a few outlines of my time spent so far after taking a farewell look at old Cookstown for perhaps a few year leaving behind me relatives & acquaintances that are hard to part with. The bell is rang which is the signal of our departure & which commenced my journey to a far distant. You perhaps was somewhat astonished to hear of my starting for this country. But then that need not astonish you as you know Boys about my age are full of wild goose notions not having their wild oats sowed yet. . . . . I went down to the Monongahela Wharf (In Pittsburgh) where I found Edward Case my partner for the trip after breakfast I proceeded to hunt us a boat for Saint Louis, shipped aboard of the New York started out in the Evening reached Wheeling the next day where I wrote home from. arrived at Cincinnati rather cold and disagreeable wrote home from here also; lay here 2 days employed time in looking over the city. our time on board the Steamer we employ in reading and looking at the beautiful scenery that can seen along this river. arrived at Saint Louis on Sunday morning after breakfast procured us a boat for starting out next day for Saint Joe; to day we spent in looking

over the City & at night went to Episcopalian meeting it was a most spendid church but there was too much formality for me. Started out on Monday evening; The Missouri is very low and it presents one of the worst looking navigable streams I have ever been on; Snags thick enough sometimes to make you almost think you were in the woods had a very pleasant trip with the exception of a fire or 2 arrived at Saint Joe on Monday the 1st of May. here all is hustle & hurry as the town is full of emigrants getting ready for the trip across the Plains; we were not long in fixing up our outfit for the trip. Bought our cattle our wagon & provisions & started on Wed the 3rd traveled about 12 miles & camped for the night; you may rest assured it was a novelty to me to be eating our Supper & driving up our cattle & chaining them to the wagon we pitched our tent and laid us down to rest between the rattling of chains & the howling of wolves all around you while the heavy rain fell upon our linnen roof which you know you cannot turn it all so amid all this we passed our first night on our trip across; John W. you may rest assured that I have passed as pleasant nights as this next morning to see us getting up still raining, looking like half drowned rats, building us a small camp fire cooking our breakfast, shivering like a Quaker as making a fellow feel as though he wished it wasn't him; but then these feelings all gradually wear away we could pad along as cheerfully after our old oxteam sometimes through mud half knee deep & sleep to the tune of howling wolves as though it were a palace. after passing the countries of the little & big Blues whose rolling Prairies cannot be equaled by any of the Western states & reaching the far famous known Platte whose crooked channels turbid waters dotted with numerous small islands covered with a luxuriant growth of cottonwood & willows with its wide spreading bottoms averaging from 4 to 5 miles in width then forming into a high range of bluffs covered with verdant grass & flowers of every varying hue Plenty of which would be no disgrace to any of your flower gardens; all this is calculated to make me feel who takes an interest in viewing Nature happy in the extreme. Passed Fort Kearney by the middle of the month"

Unfortunately, the rest of the letter is missing. The author, one of thousands of men who left home to pan gold in California, is presumably a brother of John W. Stephens. It is safe to guess that he did not find a fortune in gold and also did not return to Cookstown (Belle Vernon).

The adventurers who reached California found it to be a fair place to settle down and the emigrants who bogged down before they got to California discovered that the "Great American Desert" was fertile farmland and they stayed too. Besides the Gold Rush, the railroad and the financial panics of 1837 and 1857 were factors in the development of the Middle West. It was this expansion that finally made men choose sides on the question of slavery. The politicians in both the Democratic and Whig parties had been silent in order to preserve the unity of party and country. In our own county, the abolitionists were so hated for their denunciation of slavery and their tendency to endanger the union, their meetings and speakers had to be protected from mob violence. Furthermore, this protection was not given by elected officials but by men who believed in free speech. In Congress, the South was fearful of being outnumbered by the free states. In the West, the homesteaders had found slave holding to be unprofitable and these people who had escaped the injustices of Northern businessmen respected the Negro's right to freedom. The North feared slave competition and scorned the Southern way of life. This intolerance between the Northern businessman and Southern gentleman was of greater importance than any love for the Negro, who often had a harder life in the North.

Mr. Stephens was a Whig and was active in that party until a time came when a public stand had to be taken on the extension of slavery. When the Democrats made the Missouri Compromise null and void by passing the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and opened the new states to slavery, the anti-slavery forces in the Whig, Free Democratic, Anti-Nebraska, American (Know-Nothing), Prohibition, and Free-Soil parties consolidated their numbers. The sentiment in the North and West that the plight of slavery should not spread into the new states grew, despite the threats of secession from the South and the politicians who thought slavery was a personal affair. Conventions, mass meetings and county and state organizations were spontaneously organized in many states. Mr. Stephens was an early adherent of this new party named by Horace Greeley, "Republican". The first national convention was in Pittsburgh in 1856, and J. W. was there. A not too conspicuous absentee was the Illinois delegate, A. Lincoln.

It was Abraham Lincoln, in a debate with Douglas in Illinois, who put the issue squarely before the people. "A house divided against itself cannot stand, I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing,



or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South".

The presidential election of 1860 convinced the South that there was no place for her in the Union. The strong Democratic party had split on the slavery issue, and the new Republican party with a comparatively unknown candidate had won by carrying nearly all the Northern and Western states with hardly a vote from the South. Several weeks after Lincoln's election, South Carolina declared that her union with the United States of America was dissolved. Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas followed in quick succession. By May, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina had joined them. President Lincoln patiently waited for the secessionists to make the first hostile move which they made on April 12, 1861.

When Fort Sumter, a federal base in South Carolina, was fired on, the people on the farms around Bentleyville flocked into town to hear the latest news. Travelers from Pittsburgh and the National Pike would be full of the latest reports from Washington. The news startled the country, but few realized what the consequences would be, and most would have given much to prevent a war. There were violent differences of opinion. The President called for 75,000 men to serve three months to overthrow the secession movement. From Beallsville, Dr. John Keys, hurried to Harrisburg to offer the services of his company of cavalry to Governor Curtin. This local company had been organized in 1847 in Monongahela and had taken the name of an officer who had fought in the Mexican War—Major Ringgold. Captain Keys' offer was declined because the war department was not favorable to cavalry. Despite this rebuff, local citizens began at once to raise a company of infantry. It was soon evident that the struggle over secession would not be quickly decided when the President issued a call for 83,000 men to serve for three years or the duration of the war. Again Captain Keys was refused, but two letters to the Secretary of War brought an order to report at Grafton, West Virginia in June, 1861.

When the company of seventy men gathered at Beallsville on the appointed day, the country-side had turned out to see them off. No doubt the whole of Bentleyville was there. Seven thousand people witnessed the departure of this first body of cavalry that went into service for the Civil War. The boys

from Bentleysville were Samuel Holland, John S. Lever, Lewis Noel, Andrew Manning, Jacob L. Pierce, Adam B. Richardson, and Henry Mitchell. William Greenlee went to Beallsville but was sent home because he had a family. There were many tears shed that morning by mothers, sisters, and sweethearts. It was a scene that none of the men ever forgot. After a rousing address from the steps of the Beallsville hotel, they rode off toward Morgantown and the front lines.

The Ringgold Cavalry became an important link in the long defense line between the warring states. The men served as scouts, military police, messengers, and body guards and could boast of more mileage than any other group that served in the war. Their area of operations was western Virginia, the mountainous section of the state that remained loyal to the Union, now West Virginia. To protect the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad which linked the West to Washington D.C. was the cavalry's main duty. The "mountain department" had a skillful Confederate opponent "Stonewall" Jackson, who kept the cavalry busy. General Jackson's headquarters were at Winchester, Virginia; this town changed hands seventy-eight times, Romney was captured fifty-six times. Sometimes there was no battle; the Southerners would ride out, and the Union forces would ride in. The Rebels suffered from the climate and insufficient supplies so it was possible for a small number of Union troops to route a larger enemy force. A history of the Ringgold Cavalry company which later became a battalion was written by John W. Elwood of Coal Center, a member of the original company. In it he describes many instances of bravery and loyalty that make us proud of these farm boys turned soldiers. Captain Keys won praise from his commanding officers for his calmness and quick thinking in the heat of battle. His men grieved for their loss, when the doctor-captain died in 1863 of diseases he had contracted in the war. One of John Elwood's war stories of a humorous nature is copied here from his book.

"While we were at Grafton, the post there was besieged by the loyal citizens for a squad of cavalry to be secretly posted about 15 miles out on a certain road leading from Monongalia County down Glade Run into Taylor County, W. Va., to capture two women who were carrying the Confederate mail. The Ringgold Cavalry was called on to perform this task. We had not yet been armed or uniformed by the government. A detail of fifteen or twenty men was given instructions as to the hazardous undertaking. There was not the least doubt but that the women were heavily armed. We were to go prepared for any emergency. At this time our only weapon was a

flintlock horse pistol and a sword. This gun was of ancient make. There were iron bands around the barrel to keep it from exploding when in use. This squad was instructed to load heavily. I was on this detail, and borrowed a set of arms from a comrade, and went into Grafton, where I purchased powder and a bar of lead for slugs. I will never forget my feelings when I came back to the camp and saw the detail in the act of loading. There was each one of the boys with a penknife and a stone, cutting slugs for bullets. The loading consisted in a small handful of powder placed in first; on top of this came a wad of The Baltimore American. On top of this we put eight or ten chunks of lead called slugs. This would fill the gun about one half the barrel, and, when filled to the muzzle with brick dust, we were ready for the fight.

We set out and, when night came on, we were at the point designated. A Mr. Thomas told us that we would hear cowbells during the night and that this was the Confederates signalling to one another. Whether this was true or not there was one man in the crowd that believed it. . . . One who has been on picket duty in the mountains knows how still it becomes after midnight. It was hard for me to keep awake. The cowbells began to ring, and I felt for my gun. Away over on the other mountain another bell began to ring. This served to keep me awake for a while. It was a struggle for me to keep from going sound asleep. I could hear the men nearby in the brush snoring soundly. Tobacco juice rubbed in the eyes failed. I tried prodding myself with a pin. On either side of the road was a deep ditch. I got down into the ditch, crawled up the other bank and sat down to rest. Laying my gun across my knees, ready for action, I went to sleep and slept soundly.

About this time, two men were halted on the road where we were looking for the Confederate mail. I knew something was going on, but I could not get awake. These men had come to tell us where the women were who had the mail. Hopkins Moffitt, Christopher Krepps and I. T. Dawson were detailed to go and get the women. Just after the boys had gone, I woke. The first thing I did was to jump into the ditch, when off went my gun, and such a report! Slugs, brickdust and Baltimore American, tore a hole in the ground that was big enough to bury a good-size dog; and my gun was gone with it. Then came the whole reserve. The private in command said to me, "Are you shot?" "No, but there is one over there that is shot", I said, pointing to the woods. They all went over and



crawled around on the ground in the dark hunting for the man that I did not shoot. It was a long time before I ever told the boys the truth about that night's experience. The next morning I found my pistol. If a man was not on the ground when he shot one of those guns off, he would soon be. Great excitement prevailed the rest of the night. The Confederate Mail had been located and I had shot (?) a man crawling up on me. All remained on guard until morning.

Finally Hopkins Moffitt and his men came back from their trip. The two women who were carrying the mail had stopped for the night at the home of a Baptist preacher. They had difficulty in securing an entrance to the house. He declared that there were no strangers there. Once getting on the inside of the house they had no trouble locating the room where the ladies, who had the mail in charge, were sleeping. After some parleying they opened the door and let the men in. It seemed for while that their search was going to be fruitless. Hopkins Moffitt cast his eye under the bed and hauled out, with his sabre, what proved to be a bustle worn by one of the ladies. He did not know what it was then, but learned afterward.

This article of feminine apparel contained three hundred letters for the Confederate soldiers. In none of them was there information of any value to our army. These ladies were taken to Grafton and from there were sent to Columbus, Ohio. These were the first prisoners the Ringgold boys captured."<sup>5</sup>

Our Civil War histories are chiefly devoted to battle records, and for the few of who might wonder about the effect of the war on the home-folks, there is little in history books to satisfy our curiosity. It is, therefore, with great appreciation to Mr. Donald Darroch, Sr. that this letter, which Mrs. Bentley wrote to his mother-in-law, is made available for study.

Bentleysville Sept. 23, 1861

Dear Lavinia,

After having done my little morning work, I sit down with my pen to visit with you not knowing any way to spend my time more pleasantly without it would be in your company. We are all nearly in our usual health only your father who has been troubled with his old complaint. Last week he has been able to keep about tho he is feeble. We both went to church yesterday. He seems some better this morning while I am writing upstairs out the back window Martha Jane and

Amanda are in the garden eating grapes. They are very nice now I wish you were here to share them. I asked them what I should say to you for them. Amanda said to tell you she is well and glad of it. I think they get along pleasantly. Mrs. Newkirk and Emily are both there. Amanda is very kind to them and that is right. Our town is very healthy and few complaints in the neighborhood. Brother Neff dined with us yesterday. They have left Mr. Morton's and have gone to keeping house in Jonesestown. They think they can live cheaper. . . .



Hannah Kenworthy Bentley

I suppose our local news is similar to yours. The war seems to engross every mind. We hear little else. I thought yesterday while sitting in church that we enjoyed a very great privilege when we could sit and hear a good sermon without being annoyed with the tread of soldiers or eyes dimmed with the glistening weapons of death. Not that I despise the soldiers. Oh no! may God bless their noble hearts. Many of them are our best men. I hope that there is many Cromwells among them, men that fear God and are looking to Him for help in this their time of trial; they have left their homes and all that is dear to them in this life to defend our civil and religious liberties. Their once pleasant homes are now lonely and desolate may that Almighty Being who rules all destinies preserve them from danger and grant them a speedy return to their homes and their loved ones. Several of our neighbors left last week, fifty passed through here on last Friday from Cannonsburgh on their way to camp near Uniontown. Several hundred horses have passed through here lately destined to the Seat of War. It seems as if the whole country is concentrating their forces near the Potomac. We fear it will be a deadly conflict when the two armies meet. Some think it will be decisive but from the disposition now manifested we might almost fear a war of extermination. Now I think a good portion of our trouble has been in anticipation. Why do we not rely on the promises and trust in that Almighty Hand that has gently cleared our way thus far and

kept our heads above the waves of affliction and by whose mercies we hope to be saved when all the commotions of this sublunary world is over passed.

Next Thursday is the national fast, I think it will be observed. There is preaching appointed in the meeting houses all around our neighborhood. Our preacher thinks it ought to be strictly kept by all who have faith in prayer in view of the gloomy aspect that our once-happy country now wears. The dark that hangs over us. Oh how fervently we should all pray that the sun of peace and prosperity may soon shine bright dispersing the present gloom and bringing joy to many sad hearts. I think I had better soon close I might weary your patience. Will you visit us before long Write soon. With love to you all farewell.

Hannah K. Bentley

The two armies that Mrs. Bentley mentioned in her letter clashed at Bull Run on the 21st of July. The subsequent victory for the Confederates and the disorderly retreat to Washington convinced the Northern war department and public opinion that the rebels would not be easily put down. Most soldiers had enlisted for short periods, and their enlistments were running out. It was necessary, therefore, to draft more men for the long struggle ahead. Each state was given a quota to fill, and that number was proportioned into county quotas and a draft commissioner was appointed in each county. Bentleysville swelled with pride when the governor appointed John Stephens Commissioner to Superintend Drafting in Washington County. His quota was 2,783 men. The quota was divided among the county subdivisions according to the number of men of draft age which in Pennsylvania was twenty-one to forty-five. If the quota of a township could be filled with volunteers, then there would be no draft in that district, otherwise the commissioner supervised the selection of names from a box. Exemption from service was given to ministers, professors of colleges, school directors, judges, mariners, post officers, and stage drivers, ferrymen employed on the Post road, engineers on locomotives, all artificers and workmen employed in any public arsenal and armory, blacksmiths, and bridge builders. Since Mr. Stephens' official correspondence has been preserved, it is possible to read several of his orders.





John W. Stephens

COMMONWEALTH OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
MILITARY DEPARTMENT

Harrisburg, Oct. 16th, 1862

To the Commissioners to  
Superintend Drafting:

Your attention is particularly called to the following extracts from General Order No. 121, issued by the War Department, and you will impress upon your drafted men the importance of providing themselves with the articles below enumerated, when they can do so. They may be essential to their comfort.

"As the sudden call for volunteers and militia has exhausted the supply of blankets, fit for military purposes, in the market, and it will take some time to procure by manufacture or importation a sufficient supply, all citizens who may volunteer or be drafted are advised to take with them to the rendezvous, if possible, a good stout woolen blanket. The regulation military blanket is 84 by 66 inches, and weighs five pounds".

"As the clothing, blankets, and shoes issued by the United States to its troops are charged at average cost, and no soldier who furnishes his own blanket, woolen undershirts, drawers, stockings, boots or bootees is required to draw from the United States, it is to his interest to supply himself, and thereby avoid much discomfort, as it is impossible for the United States to supply all the troops immediately."

Very respectfully,

Ely Slifer,  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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Harrisburg, Pa., January 7th, 1863

CIRCULAR

A very large proportion of the drafted men who have been reported at the rendezvous in this State have been discharged for physical disability—To save the Government the expense of bringing in and sending back persons who are entirely unfit

for the military service, and invalids the inconvenience of the journey, the Commissioners for Drafting are requested to forward to this rendezvous medical certificates, approved by themselves in all clear cases of disability, upon which, if accepted, certificates of exemption will be given by the Mustering Officer in this city.

The disability should be of a permanent character, and the certificate should state fully its cause and extent.

By order of Gen. E. R. S. Canby

G. Chapin, Capt. A.A.A.G.

Eventually every family felt the war's demand for the service and the lives of young men. Farmers who once boasted of having many sons would wish now for a few more daughters. In the village, girls had hardly any reason to primp as there was little chance of seeing a young man in church or on the street. The shoemaker, John H. Holland, contributed four sons to the effort, John, Samuel, James, and William. Samuel was quartermaster sergeant for the Ringgold cavalry. He was captured but played sick, was left behind at a home and eventually escaped. John Elwood said, "There was not a better commissary in the department. When the Ringgold cavalry said they were hungry there was something wrong with the government. If he could not get 'grub' no one else could". Shesh Richardson sent two sons to war—Adam B. and Stephen C. "A. B." was wounded in a Ringgold skirmish and lost the use of an arm. In the Lever family, the father as well as his three sons served in the Ringgold battalion. Private Henry Lever was killed at New Creek, W. Va. and John died at Cumberland, Md., Joseph was captured and never returned to his company, the fourth to serve was Scott Lever. Jacob Pierce, a boy who had left with Captain Keys, was transferred to the hospital as a nurse in Cumberland after his health failed him in active duty. He was an excellent nurse and was remembered for his kindness to his patients. George McGiffin, William McGiffin who died at Harrison's Landing, Va. and Reed Luker were in Co. D of the 85th Infantry. George Lutes became the blacksmith for Company E of the Ringgold battalion, a later enlargement of the original cavalry company. Sloan Mitchell, George McClain and Hudson McClain served, but their records are not readily available. A farmer who lived on the road to Beallsville, Benedict Crouch, was torn by a tragedy that was not infrequent in this civil war. Benedict had sixteen children, four served in the war. William had



Group of Civil War veterans in front of the Newkirk church L to R. Leonidas Bedsworth, William Weaver, Veteran ? , Sam Mills, George Baker, Harrison Mosier, Addison Richardson, Henry Mitchell, Abraham S. Tinley, Alpheas Crawford, George Keihl, William Lusk, Hudson McClain.

moved to Arkansas and was a Confederate soldier. Fighting him were his brothers, Adah, Isaac, and Hiram. Hiram died at Folly Island, South Carolina. Other men from the vicinity of Bentleysville who left their homes to protect the Union were John Manning, Samuel Manning, Enoch Newkirk, Joseph Jennings, Obediah Sprowls, S. B. Richardson, Barnett Johnson, Samuel Frye, William Mitchell, Henry Mitchell, James Mitchell, Brady Mitchell, Isaac Mitchell and John Burke. The last two died in the war; John Burke was buried in Grave 11,929 at the dreaded Andersonville Prison in Georgia.

Other histories will tell you how the United States won the final victory. Our interest now is confined to a narrow scope which must be respected if we are not to be lost on inviting digressions. There are two men, however, in our national history whose characters were so great that they deserve and demand mention. George Washington was the leader of the men who made and strengthened the Union; Abraham Lincoln saved the Union. It cannot be out of place then to quote Lincoln's sentiments concerning treatment of the enemy—a people who had risked everything and lost everything. Peace was concluded on July 9, 1865. Five days later Lincoln told his cabinet that there would be no "bloody work". As President of the whole



United States he said, "We must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union. There is too much desire on the part of some of our very good friends to be masters, to interfere with and dictate to those states, to treat the people not as fellow-citizens; there is too little respect for their rights. I do not sympathize in those feelings". That evening, the President was shot at the theatre.

"The war won; the Union was preserved; but peace and love and honesty, and brotherly kindness had fled with Lincoln's soul".<sup>18</sup>

## Chapter 7

### POST-WAR BENTLEYSVILLE - SQUIRE BENTLEY DIES - FIRST CAMPMEETING - APPEAL FOR A BOROUGH IN 1868 - NEW SCHOOL - THALIA - LETTERS TO HANNAH BENTLEY

Fortunately, it is not necessary, in this history, to describe the postwar years of any section of this country by our own. From the source material available, I can conclude that our neighborhood suffered from nothing more serious than "money madness", which is a chronic disease of varying degrees. The North had made financial gains during the war. The West had found foreign buyers for their wheat and was busy building railroads. The South, however, was having salt poured into her wounds by radical Republicans; the leader of whom I am sorry to say, was Thaddeus Stevens. All parts of this nation suffered from the war when we stop to think of the war dead. This nation lost more young men in the Civil War than in the two World Wars combined.

To bring your picture of Mr. Bentley's town up-to-date imagine yourself as a war veteran who is coming home after three years in the army. Riding down the dirt road from Beallsville, you see the neat farms and carefully tended crops that show no scars of the war. The horror of war does not seem to have penetrated these peaceful homes, but a visitor cannot see the emptiness that was left by a son, destroyed while he was still growing. Reaching the crest of the last hill, though eager to be home, you stop long enough to make a sweeping appraisal of the peaceful village in the green valley. There, is the mill in the bend of Pigeon Creek; the gate is open and water is rushing through the mill race to turn the wheel. "Holly" Hout, the miller, must be grinding wheat or corn for the farmer whose wagon and team stand near the large building. On the right side of the road is the miller's stone house. Looking over to the hill across the creek, you can see children playing around the school (facing the present home of Mr. Stanley Caldwell). Other children, the girls holding up their long dresses, wade with the ducks near the covered bridge. Anxious now to see more of the town you gallup down the hill, pass the mill and cross the bridge. The first

friend you see is Dr. Hiram Mitchell, (son of Mark, the former tavern keeper) who is leaving his house beside the Washington road. Dr. Mitchell has a reputation for walking cross country to visit his patients. He claims he can walk to his destination in less time than it takes to saddle a horse and ride there. Seeing that he is in a hurry, you promise to drop in later at his tannery yard. (The doctor preserved skins as well as lives. His steam tannery is not far from the center of town, as the women will inform you. It was behind the site of the Kurtz Service Station.) Across the road is "the" store. Arthur Odbert and Johnston Hill manage this country establishment, having leased it from Mr. John Stephens for one hundred dollars a year. "J.W." lives at this time in the stone building that had been the hotel. Next door at "Pilgrim's Rest", Mrs. Bentley is sitting on the porch knitting for her numerous grandchildren. "Pap" Bentley is feeling his age, eighty years, and it is doubtful if he will be found in his office. Moving on to the center of town, you pass David Mitchell's blacksmith shop, John Holland's shoeshop and John Denormandie's harness shop. All the houses are on lots that border the main road. The old stone houses and the later brick houses are two-story rectangular buildings without ornamentation. The frame houses that are being built at this time have frills; the eaves and porches are decorated with scroll work. Mr. Willison Kerr lives in such a house. Between the houses or at the back of the lots are stables for the family's transportation. Several of the houses have large barns nearby. The farms of J.W. Stephens, Isaac Newkirk and Sheshbazzar Richardson surround the town. Cows and sheep are a common sight on the main street. The dirt road in summer is either dusty or muddy; so for the convenience of pedestrians, there are three stone walks across the road. The town is not as large as Beallsville nor as busy; since it is not on a major road. Mr. Kerr is able to "put-up" what few travelers there are.

Mrs. Bentley's letter in 1861 says that there was a new post office. It is hard to imagine that the local residents went to Beallsville or some other town for their mail; there must have been some system by which a rider would carry the mail and the weekly Washington Reporter to Bentleyville. There was no local government in the village. The justice of the peace who had jurisdiction over this portion of Somerset County was also the town's squire. For the first fifty years of the town's existence, Sheshbazzar Bentley and David Mitchell enforced the law here. The two district schools near town were controlled by the township school board. It is evident, as you will learn, that the towns people and the farmers on the Board often disagreed



on policy. The brick school near the Methodist Church must have become obsolete because the children went to two other schools. The students on the west side of the road attended the school on the hill, and those living across the street crossed the creek to go to a school near the entrance of the present campground. Mrs. Bentley, also mentioned in her letter the Cumberland bush meetings. Rev. Momyer from the Greenfield (Coal Center) Cumberland Presbyterian Church helped to establish a local congregation. These "Cumberlands" met in the school house and occasionally in the Methodist Church.

The following obituary appeared in the Washington newspaper to report the passing of the founder of our town:

"Died, in Bentleysville, Pa. on the 27th day of July 1866 Sheshbazzar Bentley, in the 81st year of his age. The death of this good man demands a word in favor of departed worth. Father Bentley was born April 30, 1786 on his father's farm, which he inherited, on a part of which stands the village bearing his name. He always lived there and from that spot went home to God. A life of fourscore years greatly endeared him to the community in which he lived. During his whole life he had a profound regard for religion, but it was not until January 1838 during a very gracious revival of religion under the labors of Revs. John Spencer and David Cross, that he gave his heart to God and his name to the M.E. Church. His conversion was clear, its genuineness being manifested in all the relations of life. The morning after he was converted the family altar was set up on which each morning and evening sacrifice continued to be offered til within four days of his death. The same punctuality was exhibited in the performance of all his duties both religious and secular. . . . He said the day before he died when asked of his prospects "There is not a cloud in my sky." With great calm he approached his grave."

T. C. McClure

#### WILL OF SHESHBAZZAR BENTLEY ESQ.

In the name of God, Amen. I Sheshbazzar Bentley of Somerset Township, Washington County of the state of Pennsylvania. Being in good health of body, and sound and disposing mind and memory praise be to God for the same, and being desirous to settle my worldly affairs, whilst I have strength and capacity so to do, make and publish this my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking and making void all

former wills by me at any time by me heretofore made and first and principally commit my soul into the hands of my Creator who gave it, and my body to the Earth at the discretion of my executor hereinafter named. And as to such wordly estates wherewith it hath pleased God to entrust me with, I dispose of the same as follows viz:

I will after all my debts and funeral expenses is paid to my beloved Wife Hannah, all my real estate where I now live and connected together—supposed to be about 700 acres together with all my household and kitchen furniture as long as she lives, one hundred and sixteen shares of bank stock, the dividends of the same while she lives after me.

I will to my son Henry M. Bentley the entire tract of land where he now lives on the Monongahela River, with the one-fifth of my personal estate.

I will to my son Henry's son Shesh Bentley one hundred shares of my bank stock at Brownsville.

I will to my daughter Susannah E. West, the place where she now lives known by plot number 3 two hundred and five acres and twenty three perches with the one fifth of my personal property when settled.

I will to my daughter Lavinia Jones the Old Place known by plot number two containing one hundred eighty three acres two R three perches and one fifth of my personal property when settled.

I will to my daughter Martha Jane Stevens the place known by number one plot containing one hundred and forty seven acres one R nine perches together with the tavern stand and stable and lots belonging to the same numbers 46, 47, 53 and lot number 48 where the store is now kept, and two thousand dollars first after selling said estate and one fifth of my personal estate when settled equal as the others when the above sum is taken out of the whole estate.

My daughter Amanda Newkirk I will the place known by plot number four containing one hundred fifty seven acres 2 R, thirty perches with the house and lot where I now live known by number fifty four and lot number fifty one and one fifth of my personal estate as the others.

I will to my son in law William B. Pusey five shares of my Slack Water Navigation Stock if he should outlive me. If not, it is to be equally divided among my five children.

The family grave yard is reserved for all my children's use to go to, to bury there, and to repair when needed.

I request my daughters never to give their right away by deed while they live which is given to them by the laws of the

land and my signature.

I hereby nominate and appoint my son Henry M. Bentley executor of this my last will and Testament in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal August fifteenth in the year of our Lord one thousand and eight hundred sixty four. signed sealed, published and declared, by the said Sheshb. Bentley as his last will in the presence of us who in his presence of each other have subscribed our names.

Richard Richardson)	Witness	Shesh b Bentley	
A. J. Buffington )			Seal

My wish and desire is that the five children agree to divide my Bank Stock at Washington and Brownsville and Navigation Stock in the Monongahela River, and all my bonds and Notes and Money on hand, when the Estate is settled—as the Will directs—and each heir to collect their own share when it suits them and give a Receipt to the Executor.

Shesh b Bentley

The social life of these people was limited to the gathering of friends at church, funerals, school activities, weddings, and Sunday visiting. The women on isolated farms had scarcely any activity, from Sunday to Sunday. The protracted revival meetings and bush meetings were, therefore, necessary forms of social and religious expression in these rural lives. Since the Great Revival of 1800, the bush meetings and camp meetings had become for these people what the summer vacation has come to mean to us in the present pattern of life. Events were remembered as happening before or after camp meeting. The religious significance of these week-long gatherings should not be discounted. These large meetings made it possible for small country congregations to hear a variety of preachers and to undergo an annual rejuvenation of the spirit.

In the Summer of 1867, the Methodist churches of this locality organized outdoor revival meetings in a grove in Allman's Woods on the road to Greenfield (Coal Center). The services were very gratifying; there was hardly a farmer within ten miles who did not attend the week long services. To some of these people it was evident that a larger grove would be necessary if the meetings were to become an annual event. Others opposed any move but eventually a committee came to Bentleyville to look for a larger site. Dr. T.M. McClure, pastor of our Methodist Church, was one of the committee. He came upon the present camp meeting site and was so impressed by the natural



beauty he stood for a long time, speechless; he finally exclaimed, "God is here." The committee secured a one year lease from Mrs. Stephens and laid out plans for the next summer. The factions were reconciled, and the Methodist men began to clear away the underbrush. A partial list of the men engaged in this enterprise mentions Thomas Johnson, J. Alexander Newkirk, A.P. Hopkins, R. Richardson, H. Richardson, E.O. Philips, Dr. T.M. McClure, Rev. Morris Pew, Samuel Bentley, John Jones, Richard Stockdale, Joseph Jones, John Nicholson, T.G. Hopkins, James Hill, S.W. Rogers, Benedict Crouch, R.N. West, Park Johnson, Lewis Baker, James Jones, John Farquhar, A.J. Buffington, Isaac Newkirk, and R.L. Jones.

The first encampment was a real camp meeting. An enthusiastic gathering of rural families camped in tents of muslin and canvas and cooked their food over open fires. The religious services had encouraging results; it is reported that one hundred persons were converted to Christian living.

The death of old Shesh Bentley must have brought forth from the elders many memories of the earliest days of this community. Mr. Bentley's generation saw this immediate countryside change from a rude, wilderness to a comfortable agricultural region by the labor of their own hands. The grandchildren of these pioneers heard them reminisce about Indian fighting, the Whiskey Rebellion, flat boats, wooden plows and home-made cloth while they, the grandchildren, were being raised in an atmosphere of trans-continental railroads, steamboats, the telegraph, steel farm machinery, and sewing machines. The education of these young people was also unlike that of their elders, as you will see by reading the following letters. The first is written by seventeen-year-old Felicia Hema Jones, a student at Pittsburgh Female College, to her grandmother, Hannah Bentley. "Hemie's" relatives and letters testify to her above-average intelligence and sensitivity, but there is enough evidence of good training in English and composition in this letter to present it as proof of the effectiveness of the local school. The second letter was found among Mr. Stephen's papers, and it is of immense interest because it shows how a modern school system and good teachers were valued by former citizens. This draft of the letter was unsigned.

November, 1867

My dear Grandma

Have you struck my name from the list of your correspondents: I have been intending to write ever since I came back but have a habit of putting off until tomorrow what I



"Hemie"

Felicia Hema Jones, a student at Pittsburgh Female College

ought to do today, then since tomorrow never comes, the thing is left undone. We are just home from church had a very fine Thanksgiving Sermon. I will try and remember some of it to tell you when I come home Christmas, and are now waiting very impatiently for our dinners, as we are going to have Turkey and after having the same thing to eat every day for months we will enjoy a change of diet. I wonder if Ma is not down spending the day with you. Believe I will imagine that she is and you are all sitting around the fire, the cats asleep on the hearth, Grandma knitting and a constant patter of little feet and big feet running in and out. Expect Nannie and the baby will be there about mealtime. Hannah wrote that Uncle John's were not going to move to California. I suppose you were glad of that, you would miss Aunt Jane and the boys very much. Does Henry still sleep and take breakfast with you. As the school is large this winter sometimes when I get a little tired and homesick I am almost tempted to wish I were back plodding up and down the hill, through rain and snow carrying my pile of books. Twould seem very natural to walk into your house some morning just before the bell rang leaving the door open behind me and making as much noise as any of the boys, as I always did last winter. But then I know I am learning much more here than I would there and the longer I stay the better I like it, and the more I learn, the more I want to know. Wish I could go to school for two or three more years. Have Nannie and Uncle Isaac given up their trip to Brighton. I expected them to see me when they went through the city, and as they did not come I concluded they had not gone. Our

term closes in two weeks and we are very busy preparing for Examination. We do not have any vacation between the terms, but will have it Christmas. I will be home five weeks from tomorrow night providing the river is not frozen over by that time. The fifth of this month was Dr. Pershing's birthday, he gave us a nice Oyster supper and we had a pleasant evening. Chaplain McCabe was there. he is one of the most beautiful singers I ever heard. He was in Libby prison for a long time during the war. The school made Dr. P. a present of a silver tea set, How are all of Aunt Susans. I thot Emma was going to write to me but it seems I was mistaken. Give my love to them all. Aunt Jane's and Nannie's. Hannah wrote that Ross Stephens had been out several times. I presume you cannot blame me for being the attraction now, as I am not there. Hoping to hear from you soon. I am your affectionate grand daughter.

Hemie

Bentleysville Washington County Pa.

Jan. 3 1868

Hon. John Ewing

Dear Sir:

Herewith enclosed find a petition from Citizens of this village & vicinity, seeking through yourself & Coleague—our representatives, the passage of an act, incorporating said village & vicinity into a Borough. It may be proper here to state that we were chosen by the petitioners, as a committee to see and confer with you upon the subject, before your departure. But having failed to see you personally, we now address you by mail. We desire to call your attention briefly, though somewhat more at length than is set forth in the petition, to some of the reasons why we desire and seek to have our village and vicinity erected into a Borough. First, and chiefly on account of the educational advantages, we hope to derive from being constituted, as a Borough, into a separate election & school district, with power to provide for, regulate & manage, under the provisions of the law, our public schools, in our own way, untrameled by those who have no immediate or direct interests in their maintenance. During the past two years we have established and maintained (partly by private means) a graded school, which we believe to be



second to few, if any, in the County (So our County Superintendent informs us). But as at present connected with the Township great difficulties and embarrassment are felt in sustaining, even the present status of our schools. For instance we have been paying our principal (Prof. Buffington) the sum of 60\$ per month, while our Township School Board only allows us 35\$ per month—the extra 25\$ per month being paid by private means contributed by those who pay their full proportion of school tax.

By the aid of the extra private means thus employed we have been able thus far, to secure such talent, and maintain such a grade of Public School as offers inducement to aspiring young men & ladies, from adjoining districts and townships, to attend and reap some of the advantages thereof.

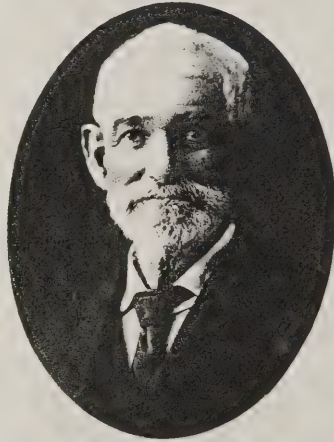
For this privilege they are willing to pay us, which would relieve us partly at least of our burdens. But our Township School Directors have been and are unwilling & have so decided (they having the legal power to so decide) that no funds obtained from outside patrons, shall be applied to pay any part of the private expenses incurred by the employment of the talent that offers & secures the inducements.

Upon this subject there is great unanimity and earnestness felt by all within the limits of our proposed borough. The difficulties encountered and apprehended in connection with the growing educational spirit of our people, has created a very general and earnest desire to be incorporated into a boro with a election and school district so that we may be able, untrameled, to employ such talent and use such facilities to promote & advance the cause of education as we may desire; And this too without militating against the schools of the Township, but tending rather, to incite them to improvement, by a commendable example.

Another reason, (though not so important as the first, is nonetheless, important) is the great distance from and inconvenience felt in getting to our place of holding elections. You are aware that our Township is a very large one being about 11 miles long, and our village & its surroundings is located in the extreme eastern corner thereof. So much of a burden is this felt to be, that we rarely get to the elections a full vote from this corner of the Township. Indeed it is impossible to get out a full vote from this locality, unless there is great excitement preceding the election. At last fall's election there was at \_\_\_\_\_ voters who declined to go to the polls, and for no other reason than distance and inconvenience of getting there.

Were it not that our letter had already grown to long we could present other good reasons in favor of our formation into a Borough, suffice it to say that wish it for the reason that we believe it right and proper that we should do this."

This letter should make us proud of the people who lived here eighty years ago. I wish it were possible to learn more about them, especially to learn why they were willing to contribute to Mr. Buffington's salary. I am too realistic to believe that the town was incorporated because all its citizens were interested in education, but this letter is proof that a superior type of education was desired and furnished by a personal sacrifice of some of its citizens. It is not surprising to learn that many of the students who were taught by Professor Buffington received college training. Andrew Jackson Buffinton, the man who seems to have inspired this progress was only thirty-six when Bentleysville hired him; his former experience however, included teaching positions at Hillsborough Academy and California Normal School, six years service to the county as Superintendent of Schools and several years as principal of California Normal.

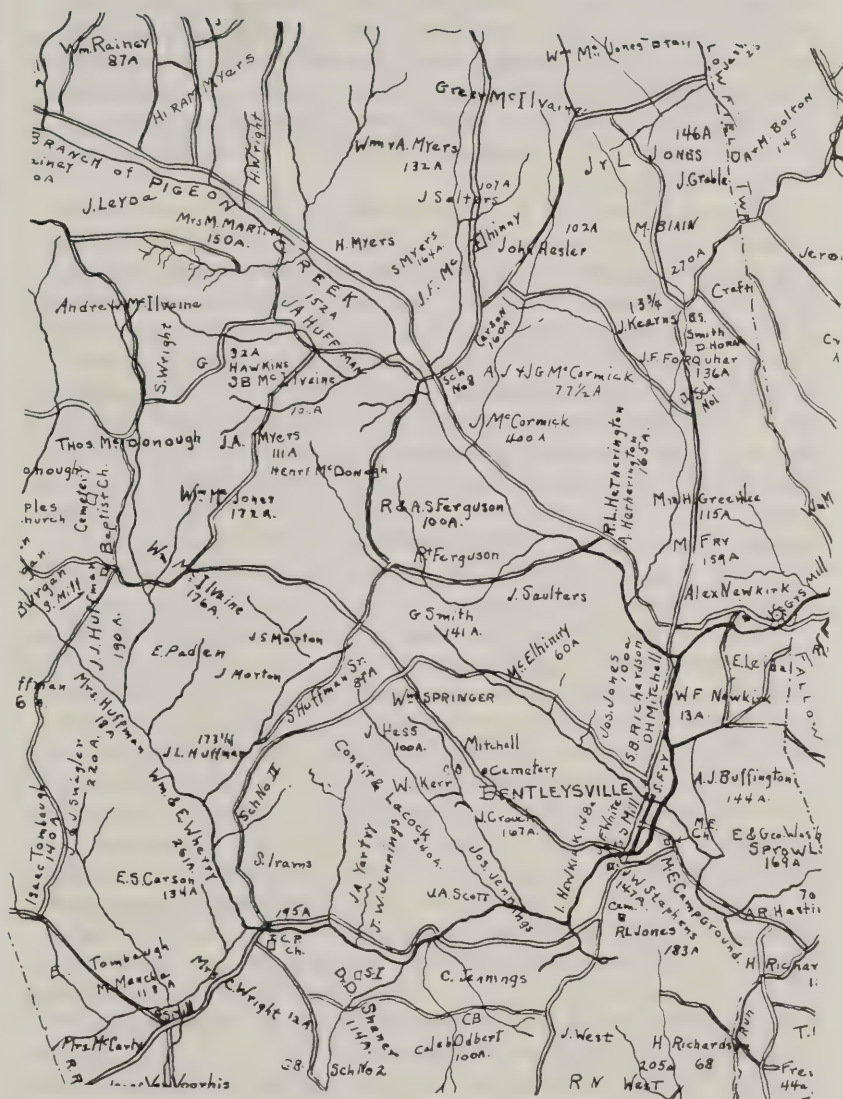


Professor A.J. Buffington

Washington Sprowls, O.R. Hastings, Harrison Richardson, R.N. West, Joseph Jennings, Robert L. Jones, John Crouch, David Mitchell, James Jones, S.B. Richardson, W.A. Newkirk, and

Mr. A. J. Buffington lived on a farm near our town (on Charleroi road) which he received from his first wife, a Taylor. A nephew, Mr. Clyde Dague, remembers him as being mild mannered and a teacher devoted to his students and profession. His picture portrays a kind, possibly humorous gentleman. "Jack" Buffington was elected to the state legislature in 1869 and was again County Superintendent from 1875 to 1879.

Bentleysville became a borough on May 2, 1868. The incorporated village numbered three hundred citizens, but to reach this number it had been necessary to take in a large area of farmland. The farms of Emory Leyda, Edward and George



A map of the south-eastern corner of Somerset Township, copied from the 1876 Centennial Atlas.



Caleb Odbert were drawn into the borough. At the first election, which must have been well attended, Dr. Hiram Mitchell was elected to be Burgess. The town councilmen were B. Crouch, Henry Newkirk, John Denormandie, Dana Mitchell, and Emory Leyda. In 1871, the borough could boast of thirty-six dwelling houses, three stores, one school house, a literary society, two grist and saw mills, one steam tannery, and a population of three-hundred. The second mill was the Newkirk mill near Fallowfield Township.

A school house was the first project of the newly-organized borough. A building that would comfortably accomodate all the students in the borough and provide facilities for community affairs was evidently desired. Solomon Huffman, the builder of many fine big barns in the valley, was hired to build a two room building on lots 46 and 47, which were, across the road from "Pilgrim's Rest" (now Nicholl's Service Station). The school was a white weather-boarded structure not unlike Mr. Huffman's barns. Civic pride must have known no bounds for the citizens of this little town who built such a fine large school with two rooms. The first principal, Professor Weller, kept the school immaculately clean. Walter Mitchell said, "If cleanliness is akin to godliness, then that school was good, for not a speck of dirt was allowed upon its floor."

With the new school, came one of the first libraries in the county, outside of the colleges; and a literary society. The muse Thalia, the patroness of comedy, lent her name to this later group. Walter Mitchell remembered Thalia as the best literary society in the county. He wrote, "When we look at some of its members we can see why it was good. There was Adah Wallace, with hair white as snow, and John W. Stephens, a graduate of Allegheny College, who had been draft commissioner for Washington County during the war, and afterwards elected to the legislature. There was A. J. Buffington, a former county superintendent, twice afterwards elected to the legislature, and again as county superintendent. David Howell, Isaac Newkirk, R.L. Jones, James Jones, S.H. Orr and the teachers R.F. Wilson and Joseph Jennings, all were good debators. Besides these nearly all the younger generation belonged."

In one of the debates in which Adah Wallace and Demas Letherman were the last two, they began their debate as follows:

Mr. Wallace said: "Mr. Chairman, I never heard such an argument as that since the old woman hung her nightcap on the horns of the moon."

When Mr. Letherman arose he prefaced his remarks with, "Mr. Chairman, I have come all the way down from the waters

of South Pigeon Creek in West Bethlehem Township to hear the far-famed and world-renowned debator, Adah Wallace."

Not only were the debaters of high order, but the program of select readings, declamations, original orations, essays, and the periodical, was well sustained. Nor did the evening's entertainment end here, for the various performances were interspersed with music furnished by Davy Kerr's string band, consisting of Davy Kerr, leader, and Orlando, Mark and Eugene Mitchell, the sons of Dr. Hiram Mitchell.<sup>12</sup>

#### In Memoriam

"The Thalian Literary Society of Bentleyville met Friday evening 15th inst, and was called to order by the chairman after which the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, it was pleased God to take to Himself three worthy members of this Literary Society, viz; H. Matilda Holland, Hannah A. West, and Leonidas H. Richardson: therefore,

Resolved, that to their demise we are admonished that "In the midst of life we are in death", and should therefore be also ready.

Resolved, that we bow with humble submission to the will of Him who doeth all things well, we feel that in the death of

H. Matilda Holland the society has lost an efficient member, her associates, a genial companion, the Sabbath and Public School a pupil of bright promise, her parents and affectionate child and the church an exemplary member that in the death of

Hannah A. West, the social circle in which she moved has been deprived of a Christian light, the Society and school of a talented member, her parents of a dutiful daughter, and the church and sabbath school of a zealous worker. That in the death of Leonidas H. Richardson, an active member of society, a faithful student, an industrious young man, a kind son and true Christian has gone from among us.

Resolved, That we tender our heart-felt sympathy to their bereaved parents and pray God that he pour into their bleeding bosoms the balm of consolation.

Resolved, That these resolutions and a minute of the proceedings of this meeting be forwarded to the county papers for publication, a copy of the same be furnished the parents of the deceased.

Com. ) A.J. Buffington  
      ) Isaac Newkirk  
      ) Miss Hema Jones"

This example of Thalian composition has led me to an observation or thought that might also come to the mind of anyone who reads this history. This memorium is a partial answer to the many dreamers who wish they could have been born in his period of history. They envy the experiences of these people who lived so close to each other and to the soil. Then, mutual assistance was a necessity. For help during a family crisis or for entertainment in leisure hours, these people had to depend upon their neighbors to provide what was needed. Food, clothing, and homes, with a few exceptions, were derived by these rural families from this immediate vicinity. Life was real. This way of live, however, also produced a constant sense of reality from its familiarity with death. Children did not grow very old before they witnessed a death in the family. The correspondence of that time gives evidence of the ever present thought on the life hereafter. In the year 1867, from these thirty-six homes and from the records of only a few of these families, I have noted the deaths of five young people. Considering the size of the town and the fact that these deaths were just a fraction of the sum, we must conclude that the people living in Bentleysville in the 1860's were all too familiar with death and its desolation. In 1861, Robert and Susannah West saw their third and last son, seventeen year old Sheshbazzar die of "brain fever" and then six years later eighteen year old Hannah, also home on a school vacation, succumbed to the disease. Leonidas Richardson died within a month of the death of Hannah, a second cousin. The grief of his parents, Harrison and Sarah, was twofold since ten year old Emmarella had also died this year. Two year old Sheshbazzar Stephens was another casualty of this Fall of 1867. His death came two days after that of Leonidas. Matilda Holland is the other young person who succumbed to a disease that Fall. Readers, who now would be willing to risk raising a family one hundred years ago?

Another letter which might help our conception of these early citizens is this letter from Mt. Union College which is near Alliance, Ohio. The writer is the son of Lavinia and the Late Rev. Peter Jones. His given name was Olin Bascomb, but he seems to prefer to be called by his initials, "O.B." He wrote this letter in 1871 while attending Mt. Union College; this Methodist school seemed to be a popular one because a number of Bentleysville boys went there. I can mention Melankthon Newkirk, Robert Wilson, Winfield Richardson, Clyde Newkirk, and Frank Stephens. "O.B." eventually married the daughter of the president of the college, Ida Clark, and became a Methodist minister in the middle west. He is well remembered; a nick-



name, "O.B. Joyfull", that he won at college gives us a clue as to the reason why. The letter is written to a cousin, Melankthon Newkirk, a son of Isaac and "Nannie". "Lank" also attended Mt. Union College a few years later. He moved to Kansas City, Missouri with his family, but his chronic tubercular condition brought him back to Bentleyville where he died in 1882, still a young man.

Mt. Union, O.  
March 23, 1871

Cousin Lankie:

Your very welcome letter was received a few days ago, and should have been answered sooner but I neglected it, as is to often the case with me in letter writing. I am getting along about old fashionedly, doing what good I can for my Country and my cause.

Our school is doing very well this term we have about three hundred students in attendance now, and there are some more coming in, when they all get here I think it will be the largest school they ever had here. There are so many here from Pennsylvania this term. There are two fellows rooming here at Brushes from Uniontown. One of them is sick I am sitting up with him tonight. this makes two nights hand running, it is getting kind of ancient to, loosing so much sleep I am going to pull off a while after tonight. I received a letter from McGiffin this week also one from Hud Crouch. they seem to think that things about the City of Bentleyville are prospering all right, as I suppose they are. What are you doing since your school closed are you going to have a summer term. I suppose Thalia is still prospering in the good old way, are you going to run it through the summer? I heard that the Millsboro exhibition beat anything Bentleyville ever had. Is that the case? if it is you fellows must spunk up. It will never do to let any other place in Washington County beat Bentleyville for Literary Performances.

Our society is doing very well this term, all the old members are back so things in it go off lively. I suppose you will get to hear your new preacher on next Sunday. He has a son and daughter here attending school. We get our same preacher back again. I was very well satisfied for he is such a good preacher.

Wilson is back he's going to be here untill the close of the summer term. Is Franklin Moor Stephens about he has never written to me since I have been back this last time. I guess he has gone clear back on me. Are you still studying

German and if so how does it go by this time. I am tugging away at Latin it goes mighty hard, we are reading Ceasar have a class of about twenty.

Well, M.B. I must close for the present you must excuse this for I am too sleepy to write any thing very interesting answer real soon and give me all of the Bentleysville news.

Your Cousin

O. B. Jones

There is one more letter that you should read. It is interesting to us because we can gather from its pages a first hand impression of an early camp meeting. The author of the letter is Leonidas Bentley, a son of Henry; he is a ministerial student at Mt. Union with his cousin Olin Bascomb. All of his letters, that I have read, are serious and leave you with the impression that you have read the notes of a sermon that he has in mind.

Mt. Union College, O.  
Sept. 5, 1870

Dear Grandma Bentley,

At this late day, but according to promise, I shall endeavor to hold a short conversation with you in this our accustomed way. In the first place I arrived here all safe and sound, and am enjoying myself as best I can. I landed here on Friday noon, Bascom was to be at Mon. City and we were both to go together, but he failed to make time and therefore I did not see him on the boat as I had expected; but my friend Wilson was there, and we came out together. Was sorry Bascom was detained on account of the camp meeting. On Saturday then I went to the Ohio State meeting and had a good religious time; there was power there with God and rejoicing among his children. The attendance was large and on sabbath morning heaven seemed very near to earth, it seemed to me as if God was every where. In the morning when the sun rose in the eastern horizon, and began to peep through the trees, pouring its genial and warming influence upon the natural or external world. Me thought how mightily Christ was pouring from his great fountain of love that which was beyond the power of human language to express. Indeed it seemed no trouble to get those to speak, whose hearts were irradiated with the love of Christ.

Here is the great difficulty, when our class meetings are so cold sometimes, because "Christ is not formed within the hope of glory". The great trouble here was to get a chance

to speak. I feel that God is blessing me and giving me to see more exalted views of his wonder-working power and more fully preparing me for the great work of life upon which I have but recently entered. I feel that he is my saviour and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to Him. There is a beauty in the Christian life worth striving to obtain and it is the love of God continually in the human heart. Life's duties seem but a little task, life's trials only keep us near to God, and direct our footsteps in the narrow road that terminates hard by the throne of our blessed redeemer who purchased so great a salvation for us.

I enjoyed your campmeeting and on Tuesday I felt as if Christ was blessing the church at least he was blessing me and I felt that it was a delightful place to be. A great many at our campmeeting professed sanctification. Now by what ever term it may be called or what ever form they may give to it, it is nothing more than the love of Christ in the heart and I say the more of this we get, we will come up to the requirement of God. People make a great fuss about being sanctified and are always talking about it. Now I believe in this term but understand me to say do all that we can for God, and our lives will show whether we are trying to do the will of God and the world will take cognizance of it.

L.H. Bentley

His Grandmother Bentley was a shining example of a Christian whose faith is demonstrated by a kind and generous nature. In one of her last letters to her grandchildren, which was written with a trembling hand, she closed with this thought "If I send you a little mite, think not that I send it to strengthen that tie that I feel now exists between us, which I believe will be strengthened and perpetuated, when we will have no use for money, throughout Eternity, in our happy home."

"He Giveth His Beloved Sleep

"Mrs. Hannah K. Bentley widow of the late Sheshbazzar died at her residence in Bentleyville, Pa., aged nearly eighty three. Her parents John and Susanna Cleaver were eminent Friends, who reared their daughter in their own faith and practice. In March 1828 she joined the M.E. Church and from that time, like Enoch, she walked with God, never wavering in her fidelity to Christ and his cause. Benevolence was the most prominent of all the beautiful traits of character she possessed. She esteemed herself the Lord's steward ever feeling a deep interest in all the enterprises of the Church. Especially dear to her was the



cause of Missions. She constituted herself and all her children life members of the parent society. She was a life member of the Seamen's Friends' Society also an ardent supporter of the Children's Aid Society and the Five Points Mission. The pleading voice of the destitute freedmen ever found a hearty response in her great loving heart. Her last letter (written three weeks before her death) was to a young colored man in an Atlanta University whom she had been aiding to enter the ministry. It was truly said at her funeral services that the name of Hannah K. Bentley might be inscribed upon many a memorial pew or window of churches even as far as Oregon.

Her library contained many standard works of Methodism. She loved the Christian Advocate. Its weekly visits to her home were never suspended since its first issue. She sent a copy of it, also, into the homes of all her children. She provided religious literature for her grandchildren, distributed many Bibles, with a mild admonition to the recipient to read the "blessed word of God".

.....After three weeks of extreme suffering without a murmur or complaint she fell asleep in Jesus April 29, 1874."

Christian Advocate

## Chapter 8

### DRESS IN 1870 - SCHOOL LIFE - CENTENNIALS - BUSINESS DIRECTORY - GENERAL STORE - THE CALL OF THE WEST - HEMIE'S REPORT FROM KANSAS CITY- BENTLEYSVILLE RAIL ROAD CO.

The period of the 1870's which this chapter will cover can be characterized by the bustle—now a necessity in a lady's wardrobe. The hoop skirts and crinoline petticoats of the war and ante-bellum years were now unfashionable. Dresses had narrow skirts and were elaborate with braided patterns, fringe and tassels. Round hats piled high with flowers, lace, ribbon, and feathers replaced the poke-bonnet that had been fashionable, with variations, since the start of the century. Male attire had little visible renovation; the frock coat was the perennial fashion. The unionsuit made its "appearance" in this period. Toward the end of the seventies a reform movement had begun in Germany with the idea that wool was the only proper covering for the body. Everything had to be wool, even handkerchiefs. Previously, all underclothing for summer and winter had been cotton; therefore the soft, warm wool was in great demand. It was impossible to get enough woolen sheets, stockings, gowns, and materials. The unionsuit with its equal distribution of weight over the figure was part of this movement.

In 1871, Isaac Newkirk built a frame house in Bentleysville which is still a ready example of the architecture of this decade. He built his home next to the home of his mother-in-law, Grandma Bentley. It became the town show-piece; no other home had leaded glass windows. Mr. Newkirk owned the Bentley Flour and Saw Mill then and prepared his own lumber.

This same year the mill and the miller's stone house across the road were sold to an Allegheny County miller, John F. White. Mr. Newkirk had installed steam power in the mill and had retired the water wheel that had turned the stones for a half century; Mr. White now installed a roller process which improved the quality of the flour. Formerly, the flour was dark, coarse, and made bread dough that was nearly too heavy to raise. When the mill was not grinding wheat and other grains, the power was diverted to the saw mill. Mr. White hauled logs

and lumber with a team of three horses, and that team and wagon was a common sight on the road through Bentleyville. The lead horse was generally covered with mud and its tail was a muddy string. The roads in wet weather were several feet deep in mud. After such a trip, the miller would swim his horses in the creek to remove the dirt.

For pedestrians, a boardwalk ran along the road on one side or the other. In places it was a single plank, but some property owners had built substantial boardwalks. For the convenience of the school children, a thick plank was laid across the road in front of the school. Its value was questionable, however, because the heavy wagons had rounded off the timber and it was necessary on muddy days for the school children to perform feats of balance to cross the bridge. The children, therefore, carried their shoes and wore gum boots. At some later date, stone paths were laid across the road in several places.

The school had an entrance that seems unique to us. It would be interesting to know what led the school directors to design it. The school faced the street, but it was hidden by a high board fence that bordered the front yard. The students could not see over the barricade and while in class could not be distracted by movements on the road. There was no door or gate; entrance to front yard was made by way of a stile, two pairs of steps over the high fence.

The teachers of Bentleyville had in 1875 the same discipline problems as modern teachers. Some students came to learn and others were taking six month's vacation from farmwork. They could attend till they were twenty. The ones eager to broaden their perspective did so in spite of numerous handicaps. Rural children had to pump and carry water, chop wood, haul coal, and ashes, and tend to numerous jobs which they accepted as their due responsibility. The miller's son, Tom White, worked at the mill in the morning before school, at noon, and after school. For him, school must have been a place to sit down and rest. Students prone to scholarship studied despite these handicaps. Joseph Jennings, at this time a teacher, had read while he plowed by tying a book between the plow handles. Like most public schools, there were eight grades. Pupils wishing to have instruction in high school subjects persuaded the principal to teach them subjects like algebra and Latin at recess time or after school. When Lena Weaver went to California Normal School after graduating from the eighth grade she had to compete with high school graduates. Homestead had the nearest high school. Many nights she had to study with an oil lamp under the table in her dormitory room.



The school building, though new, had few of the advantages we now recognize. The two rooms held all eight grades; the first five grades in one; the three highest in the principal's room. When the farm boys around the stove warmed up, the room would occasionally reek from the odor of muskrats and skunks. The students sat at double desks. It is not difficult to imagine the discipline problems which would result when students had to sit together on one wide seat.

Harry McLain was a student in this school, and in his later years remembered his fellow students to be: Tom White, Norah Umbel, Nelson Luker, Mary Rankin, Charlie Scott, Elmer and Ollie Grable, Jennie Malone, and Bill West. Two of his teachers were young Mt. Union College graduates—O.B. Jones and Winfield F. Richardson.



Harrison and Sarah Richardson with their Family: J. Elliott, Cecelia, Winfield F., and Richard (seated).

A great event in the year 1875 was the centennial celebration of Pigeon Creek Presbyterian Church. The festivities aroused public interest to a point that a wagon maker in Bentleysville was inspired to record the history in poetry. Below, are a few stanzas from Richard Huffman's poem, "The History of Pigeon Creek Church".

More than one hundred years ago,  
Did Rever'nd McMillan,  
Come wading through great banks of snow,  
To care for the Lord's children.

The year seventeen and seventy-five,  
He done his preaching first,  
To those Christians, while they did strive,  
To have the church blossom blest.

The first church there was built of logs,  
A hundred years ago;  
The roof was made of rough clap-boards;  
It was those days a show.

The second church was built of stone,  
The walls they soon, gave way,  
And so the walls to the ground was thrown,  
Which ended then its day.

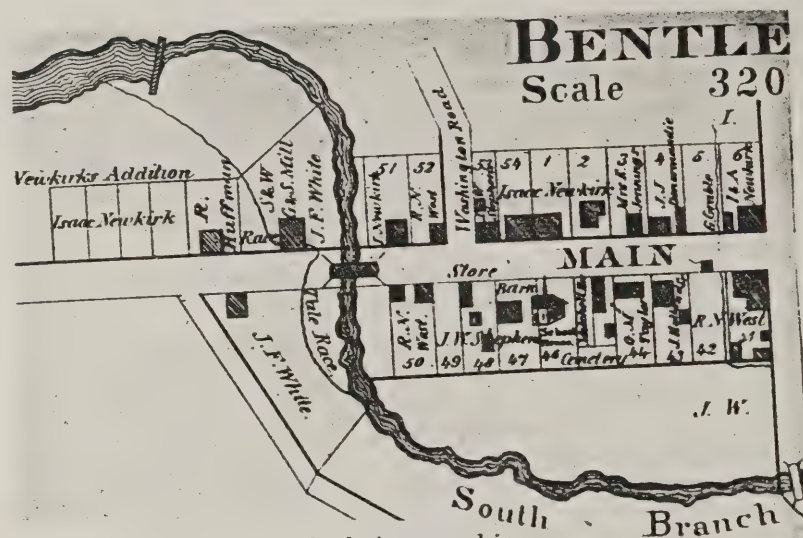
Upon the hill the stone were drawn,  
To build a wall secure,  
To be this church's foundation,  
Which stands to us so dear,

This form, seventy by fifty-five,  
Has stood there fifty years;  
May not a heavy tool, e'er drive  
It from where it now appears.

A national centennial celebration occurred the next year, 1876, when the United States marked a century of independence. The Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia was spectacular enough to induce a number of our citizens to take the train from Pittsburgh to the "City of Brotherly Love". In Washington, Pa., the merchant, J.A. Caldwell, published an "Illustrated Combination Centennial Atlas", a large (15 x 18) book which contained many drawings of homes and farms in the county, maps of all the towns and townships and a directory of the county citizenry. The map of Bentleysville gives us an exact picture of our town in 1876, and the business directory lists these persons:

A. J. Buffington  
L. Bedsworth, blacksmith  
A. C. Crouch, farmer  
S. B. Crouch, farmer  
W. H. Cleaver, farmer and stock raiser, 200 sheep  
John Crouch, farmer and stock raiser  
J. J. Denormandie, saddler & harness maker  
Joseph Frew, 49 acres  
S. Fry, 5 acres  
James Gibson, school teacher  
J. L. Gibson  
M. Galway  
N. Galway  
James Guntley  
Jacob Grable, shoemaker  
J. M. Grable, merchant  
Richard Huffman, wagon maker  
John Holland, shoemaker  
O. R. Hastings, farmer, 25 sheep  
Samuel Howel  
W. Holland, shoemaker  
Jacob Hartsock, wagon maker  
H. Harvey, coal miner  
James Jones, farmer, 100 acres  
Robert Jennings, farmer  
Joseph Jennings, teacher and farmer  
D. Jennings  
R. L. Jones, 183 acres  
David Kerr, carpenter  
Wilson Kerr, farmer and hotel keeper, 40 acres  
Dr. J. H. Leyda, physician and surgeon  
J. N. Leyda, physician and surgeon  
George Lutes, laborer  
Emery Leyda, farmer and miller  
S. M. Leyda, farmer  
Levi McGiffin, laborer  
David Mitchell, farmer and stock raiser, 67 sheep  
O. T. McElhinny, merchant  
G. W. McClain  
Hiram Mitchell, physician and surgeon  
Isaac Newkirk, farmer  
W. A. Newkirk, farmer  
J. A. Newkirk, farmer  
Caleb Odbert, farmer and stock raiser

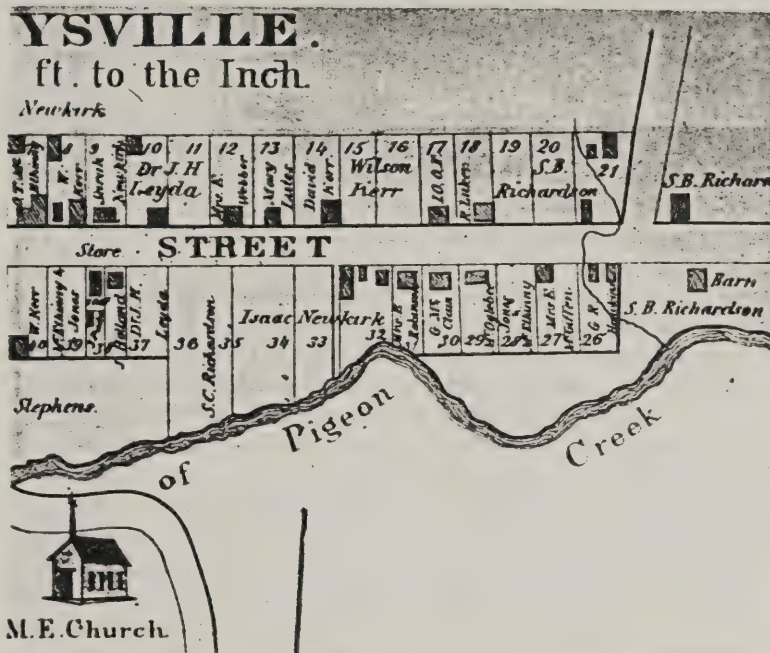




Map of Bentleyville Which Appeared in  
J.A. Caldwell's Centennial Atlas, 1876.

J. Paden  
Harrison Richardson, farmer and stock raiser, 238 acres,  
200 sheep  
W. F. Richardson, farmer  
S. B. Richardson, Sr., farmer and stock raiser  
Thomas J. Richardson, farmer  
S. B. Richardson, Jr.  
Alex Simpson, farmer  
G. W. & Edward Sprowls, farmers and stockraisers  
Isaiah Sprowls, farmer and stock raiser  
F. M. Stephens, farmer  
J. W. Stephens, merchant, 200 sheep, 147 acres  
A. S. Tinley, farmer  
Geo. M. Taylor, carriage manufacturers  
J. F. While, proprietor of Bentley mills  
Martin Wills  
William Wilson  
D. B. Watkins, farmer  
Thomas West, farmer and stock raiser, 100 sheep  
John West, 4 acres  
R. N. West, 100 sheep, 205 acres

For a borough of three hundred people there appears to be an  
abundance of medical service. The fact was that there was for



only a short time more than one doctor and that there was always need for more. Dr. Hiram Mitchell moved to West Virginia shortly hereafter and Dr. J.H. Leyda left in 1878. J.N. Leyda was probably a relative "reading" medicine with Dr. Leyda. He had other students we are familiar with: Jesse Scott of Fallowfield Twp. read with him and practiced seven years in our town; and J.W. Stephens' son Frank studied with him. Bentleysville produced a quantity of professional men in this period; William W. Sprowls left home to practice medicine in Huston; David Mitchell's son Gibson doctored the Clover Hill community; Edward DeNormandie, the saddler's son became his home town's first dentist; O.B. Jones was a Methodist minister; Walter Mitchell, another son of the blacksmith and squire, became a professor at California Normal; and there were innumerable teachers.

A new store room was built in 1876 (now Messler's) by the I.O.O.F. in conjunction with their club room. Oliver T. McElhinny who had previously established himself in Bentleysville and John M. Grable rented the storeroom from the lodge and carried on a good business in items that covered everything from drugs to farm machinery. J.W. Stephens had inherited the old Bentley store near the school and apparently alternately

managed and rented the business. His son, William, bought the stock from E.J. Young in 1881 and kept store for a few years before entering the lumber business with his brothers, Henry and Charles, in Monongahela.

The old store had an inventory that would make a modern sales clerk dizzy. The storekeeper had to fit all sorts of articles which are today fitted by experts. In Mr. Stephen's store you could buy from their large assortment: ladies shawls, girdles, cotton flannel, printed material, tureens, covered chambers, coal buckets, stove pipe, men's hats, paper cuffs and collars, corset laces, violin strings, varnish, linseed oil, Jamaica ginger, vermifuge, Davis Home Relief, Johnston's liniment, Sheridan's Powders, nutmet graters, Arbuckles coffee, water crackers, milk strainers, pie pans, nails, and screws, carriage bolts, musket caps, candle wick, cigarettes (loose), Happy Thought tobacco, stove polish, hog rings, canary seed, gum drops, salt sifters, snuff, gunpowder tea, 10 x 12 window glass (3 cents), cinammon bark, mourning paper, Spanish whiting, boys buckle shoes, ladies cotton and wool hose, Bloom of Youth rouge, barrels of salt (\$1.60) and a croquet set.

A third store was opened this same year but was too late for the Atlas. J. Alexander Newkirk left his father's farm and mill in the care of his brother, Sansom, and for reasons of poor health became a merchant. His family moved into the house that was across the alley from O.T. McElhinny's home (now site of A. & P.). The store was across Main Street beside the West home.

The citizens of this valley became excited in 1872 over a proposed extension of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad through Washington County. The Ohio & Baltimore Short Line Railway Co. (owned by B. & O.R.R.) was formed this year to connect Washington and Wheeling with Baltimore and Washington D.C. The economy of this area was strained by the competition of wheat farms and cattle ranches in the Middle West; so this prospect of a railroad connection with Eastern coastal markets was a happy prospect. The road was to go east from Wheeling and Washington, pass near Bentleyville and the Newkirk Church, cross the Monongahela River at Belle Vernon and connect with the B. & O. at Dawson Station. The work was prosecuted with vigor in 1873 until the start of the financial panic of that year, when it was suspended.

The depression that followed the prosperous post war years was hard on the railroads. It started a suicidal rate war between the roads, wage reduction and crew reduction. In July of 1877 the train crews in Pittsburgh refused to take the trains



out and then took possession of the switches. The riot that ensued ended after a mob burned the round house, grain elevator, railroad hotel, and at least a thousand freight cars and coaches. In Bentleyville, wages had been inflated after the war, but they had not caught up with the cost of living. The dissatisfaction of local farmers was shown by the number of citizens who left comfortable homes in our county to trek out to Kansas, Iowa, and other plains states to build new homes and break the thick sod.

The federal government was the generous proprietor of vast territory in the Middle West and had in 1855 passed an act which gave war veterans a bonus of 160 acres or less of government land. Many veterans would be too old or unwilling to use the land so provisions were made for the transfer of these warrants. Among Mr. John W. Stephen's papers were six such grants of land to soldiers of the War of 1812 and Indian Wars. They had all been transferred to William B. Pusey. Mr. Pusey had been mentioned as the husband of Mary Bentley. He was a Pittsburgh merchant and must have bought a lot of these bounties because in 1857 Mr. Stephens had bought from him 1544 acres in Iowa for \$7900. What he did with this land is not known; presumably he was speculating with an eye toward the railroad.

There is no way of learning the identity of all the men who followed Horace Greeley's advice: "Go West young man, go West". A.J. Buffington was one, two McDonough brothers reportedly became wealthy, John White bought land in Kansas but sold it (the land is now Emporia, made famous by a relative, William Allen White). Isaac Newkirk was restless and apparently dissatisfied with Bentleyville's future and left for Kansas City, Missouri in 1878. He traded his new house and property for the property and cash of his brother-in-law, J.W. Stephens.

Bentleyville, Feb. 25, 1878

We the undersigned have this day dealt as to the exchange of certain properties in this Borough.

I. Newkirk as agent for his wife exchange all the land owned by them lying north of Washington road containing 41 acres and 23 perches and lots No. 1 and 2 in general and J.W. Stephens as agent for his wife exchanges for the above named properties Lots no. 53 and 47 in said plan with all improvements thereon and pays in addition \$2900 dollars to Isaac Newkirk as difference money".

These men were dragging their wives and children to the plains country that was swept in summer by hot parching winds



John W. Stephens is standing in front of the house he traded from Isaac Newkirk.

and in winter by blizzards. The women who left painted, clean, tidy houses in our valley were confronted with ugly unpainted buildings, dust storms that made dusting useless, and water that was almost too hard to use in washing. In the dry months, when water was scarce, dust would get in their hair and there was scant water to wash it out. Women who had washed their windows regularly at home got into the habit of leaving them go unwashed for six months or longer. Life was so hard, women grew slack and drab and careless.

Felicia "Hemie" Jones went west to teach and in this letter to J.W. Stephens mentions another disadvantage of the West. "J.W." had recently been elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly.

Kansas City, Mo. Feb. 8, 1879

My dear Uncle,

I was very glad to hear from you once more. The silence has been unbroken for a long time. Letters can always



wait to be written and in a busy life so many things demand immediate attention that we may sometime appear to be neglectful of our own "dear ones" in an epistolary way when we do not mean to be so. The greatest cause I've had for rejoicing in a long time has been your election. I hope your new duties are pleasant ones and that you are enjoying life in Harrisburgh. I know of only one thing that will have a tendency to prevent your becoming a No. 1 politician—you are too good a man. If that difficulty can be remedied we will expect you to distinguish yourself and all your friends. Your election under such adverse circumstances was a very flattering testimonial of the regard of the Republican Party of your District for yourself and you richly deserved it. After profound meditation upon the subject and large personal experience, I have arrived at the conclusion that the advantages of this Western world are diminished and its beauties sadly marred by the diseases incident to its climate. Horace Greely surely never had "ague" or malarial fever else he had not written "Young man, etc". At present only my closely cropped hair tells the story of my weary months of invalidism. It's Mark Twain says it's not to be supposed I did it for fun. I certainly resembled a shadow of the past for some time but have much more than regained my usual flesh and am told repeatedly that I look much better than before I was sick. "The best laid plans of mice and men oft gang a gley". And bring us naught but grief and pain for promised joy."

I certainly had "great expectations" when I turned my face to the "setting sun" and, I have anything but realized them; still I am not vanquished. Hope springs eternal in the human breast. I've been teaching again for sometime. My school is not large or very remunerative but pleasant. I will only continue it till I can make arrangements. May get a position in the Public Schools here or nearer home. If not will go back East I presume. Hannah at present has two very good opportunities "to double her joys and divide her sorrows". One is an Englishman—widower with three children but in good circumstances of good habitation. She would do well to have a nice home here in Kansas City. I am to live with her. The other a staid bachelor belonging to a southern family and living not far from Lexington. Our Jones friends in Mo. think he is everything that could be desired by any reasonable woman. He is a farmer. She does not want to live in the country but I think will marry him. We will expect a visit from you after she is settled. Who knows



but I may find my fate though at present candor compells me to confess the prospects are not flattering. I fear my other self has never had an existence, or has perished in the universal struggle to obtain a living. I am really curious to know what will happen to me next.

Kansas City is a most delightful place. We all agree as to that I have never known so many pleasant people anywhere that I have been. Their kindness I shall ever gratefully remember. We have never once felt that we were among strangers. Olin has been to visit us twice. He seems to be succeeding well. We hope in the spring he will be sent near enough to make his home with us and go out on the trains. Kirk, Hannah, and I went to hear Theodore Tilton a few nights since "Heartsease" was the subject. I have not heard anything finer for a long time. Macaulay might have been proud to own many of his sentences, so finely were they worded. . . .

Affectionately,

Felicia H. Jones

In 1878, five years after the first attack of railroad fever, a second hit our borough. A narrow gauge railroad between Pittsburgh and Washington, Pa., the Pittsburgh Southern Railway, was being rapidly constructed and the company was contemplating a southern extension from Finleyville down the North Branch of Pigeon Creek through Bentleysville, Hillsborough (Scenery Hill) and possibly to Morgantown. An active exponent of this of this spur was the president of Washington and Jefferson College who hoped it would bring more students to his college. The businessmen and farmers along the proposed route eagerly proposed to prepare the road and donate the land. The section through this township was graded by a committee of local men who formed a company and made a contract with the railway company.

Bentleysville, Pa. August 28, 1879

The Bentleysville Rail Road organised by electing J.F. White Pres. J.Y. Scott, Vice Pres. J.M. Grable Sec. A.J. Buffinton Treas. F.M. Stephens Ast. Sec. S.B. McIlvain Collector R.L. Jones Ast. Collector. In motion of R.L. Jones it was resolved that seven members of the committee constitute a quorum. On motion of J.M. Grable it was resolved that the committee meet every Friday at 3 o'clock reconsidered to Saturday evening at 5 oclock on motion of R.L. Jones

was resolved that we receive proposals on the Wm. Jones mile. Resolved that James Jones, O.T. McElhinny and Noah Jones act as committee to article or see that the subscription on the Kammerer Hillsboro and Plum Run Divisions for the amount subscribed for the Kammerer cut was all right.

Sept. 27, 1879

Committee meets, J.F. White in the chair minutes of last meeting and approved. Committee on Kammerer Cut report 5 scoops on Monday and Tuesday no work on Wednesday in fore noon, after noon 6 scoops. Committee on bridges report one butment built. Resolve that we have a frolic on grading on mile in Boro Saturday withdrawn. On motion the Bridge Committee be instructed to put up the butments and Grading Committee get ready for work and a frolic. Resolve that we allow \$1.10 for Labor for 10 hours. Resolve that we allow \$3.00 for two horse team and \$4.00 for four horse team. Mr. Buffington reports that Mr. Stephens did not authorise anyone to use name and will sign no papers. Sec. ordered to notify Mr. Hawkins to attend meetings and look after his interests. Resolve that Mr. Buffington act as committee to get a certificate from F.M. Stephens authorising J.W. Stephens to act for him.

Nov. 8, 1879

Committee meet J.F. White in the chair, minutes of last night read and approved as read Committee on Bridges report progress Tie Committee report progress L. Van Eman report that John McDonough will put in his ties by paying Board bill of men that sawed them. Resolve that the Henry Myers mile be laid over until another time. Resolved that the price of labor from 21 October be \$1.25 per day. Resolve the cribs for bridges No. 5-6-7 be contracted for. Resolve that there be a frolic getting out lumber at Crafts on Thursday next.

R.L. Jones, Sec. protom

Nov. 15, 1879

Committee meet J.F. White in the chair minutes of last meeting read and approved. Members present D. Martin, N. Jones, S.B. McIlvain, O.T. McElhinny, J.W. Stephens, R.L. Jones, James Jones, Bridge Committee report contracted No. 5-6-7 to Simpson and Tinley for \$40 and report Iron here 2825 lbs. at 4-1/2 delivered at Bentleyville for 127.13

Resolve that S.B. McIlvain be ordered to pay Jones and Laughlin and draw on treasury the amount of 127.13. Grading Committee report progress. Resolve that Sam Young be notified by Sec. to do his share of the Huffman mile. On motion that the balance of the subscription be collected at once. Resolve that a party be had at Crofts at some suitable time and Croft be asked to prepare grub for the same and be paid for by committee. Resolve that the treasurer be authorized to borrow money sufficient to meet the demands.

In the summer of 1880 the committee "articled" with Pittsburgh about "laying the iron". There is a statement about "4 or 5 bridges on the North Fork" that were condemned, but the minutes give us no details, and it may be that another committee was responsible for those bridges. Other committees working on the proposed railroad must also have had difficulties and delays because the iron rails never came and a pile of ties that Mr. White had squared in his saw mill rotted away. The original railway company had become bankrupt in the meantime and was sold at a sheriff's auction. A letter from the new president, James H. Hopkins, to J.W. Stephens explains the reason for the failure of the venture.

Pittsburgh Southern Railway Co.  
No. 119 Liberty Street  
Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Nov. 9, 1881

Mr. J.W. Stephens  
Bentleysville, Wash. Co. Pa

Dear Sir

In reply to your letter I have but a few remarks to make.

That part of your letter which refers to your relations with the old P.S.R.R. Co. is entirely irrelevant. The present Co. is no way responsible for any act or promise of the old Co. We were deceived and disappointed as you were. And there is no occasion to fling in our faces what the old Co. did or failed to do.

Your contract with the present Co. gives you more ground to stand on. But even as to that, I disclaim any personal responsibility. I prepared a contract requiring your Committees to complete the work in a specified time. While I was absent another contract was prepared omitting this and some other important clauses. This one was already executed



by the Committees and the Board of Directors authorised me to execute it for the Co. rather than incur the delay of getting the one I proposed executed. At the same time the assurance was given that the work would be vigorously prosecuted. You know how this promise was kept—or rather was not kept. Had your work been done promptly the iron would have been laid. Your delay caused other expenditures, which took the money intended for the extension. Even after that when you were ready, I was willing and proposed to raise my share of the money required, but I could get no cooperation from others interested and felt it unfair to ask me to bear the entire burden. . .

Yours truly

James H. Hopkins

January 6th, 1883

R.R. Committee Meet Members present J.W. Stephens, R.L. Jones, O.T. McElhinny, D.L. Martin, J.F. White, S.B. McIlvain, J.M. Grable, On motion that we make an assessment of \$20 on each member. Ordered on motion of R.L. Jones that one of the committee to look after the offers made for our road, No second On motion the collector procede at once and collect from all parties by either getting the money or good notes and the Sec. ordered to notify all parties at once of the amount due. On motion the audit be closed \_\_\_\_.

## Chapter 9

### SOCIETY NEWS FROM 1880 - RICHARD HUFFMAN'S MIRACLE - "THE BINGVILLE BUGLE" - CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - TWO YOUNG DOCTORS - CROUCH MURDER - BENTLEYSVILLE BAND

This chapter and the remaining ones concern people and events that are remembered by our eldest citizens. The previous chapters have been constructed around facts gleaned from legal documents, county histories, and family scrap books. These recollections of "Bentleysville" will from this time be chiefly drawn from the reminiscences of men and women who lived here in the Victorian Age and later.

There are persons living who remember when Elizabeth White married William Pusey Stephens. Another wedding in the 80's was that of Lillian West and Winfield Richardson. Winfield taught in the public schools a few years until he took over the Stephens' store and bought J.W. Stephens' home. He was in the "mercantile business" till 1900, then he switched to real estate. They say that Frank Stephens and Mary (Nannie) West were childhood sweethearts and that the families frowned on the match because the two were first cousins. J.W. Stephens, his father, said he had to come to Bentleysville for his bride because the Stephens family in Fayette County was becoming ingrown. Whether the story is true or not neither Nannie nor Frank ever married. Their schoolmate Hudson Crouch married Gertrude Gibson and they bought the old tavern in 1883 and opened it once more to travelers; they named it "The Crouch Hotel".

One traveler was Isaac Newkirk who made at least one return visit to this community in 1882. This visit was prompted by the death of his son, Melankthon. "Lank" had gone west with the family but the climate must have aggravated his tubercular condition because he came back to convalesce at his Uncle John Stephens'. Martha Jane nursed him until his untimely death, he was in his twenties.

Isaac must have painted an attractive picture of life in Kansas City because Lavinia Jones allowed her daughter, Bella Virginia, to accompany him on his return. She made several trips to the

Middle West, visiting Felicia, Hannah and O.B. Jones. On the second visit she renewed her friendship with Samuel Warren Piersol, a young man she had met while teaching in Fayette County and married him out there.

Bentleysville at this time could almost boast a wild life preserve. "J.W." had Harry McClain bring four deer from Virginia, and he let them graze around the house behind a high fence. The deer were such a curiosity, hundreds of people drove through town to see them. A story about them concerns a servant girl who was chased by one. The girl screamed loud enough to dislocate her jaw and had to visit Dr. Scott for treatment in order to close her mouth. Another time, Mr. Stephens planned to free the deer for a deer chase. Tom White says every hound in the county was tied-up in the barn. They thought the event would be the biggest one in the history of the town. The sheriff, however, thought differently and stopped it.

One evening in the fall of 1882 there was an entertainment at the school house which marked a memorable event. During the program, Richard Huffman walked abruptly into the room and the crowd became still and some were temporarily frightened because until this appearance and for a number of years previously, "Dickie" Huffman had been a chronic invalid crawling around town on his hands and knees on a board. In his earlier healthy days, Dickie had been a carpenter with his father, Solomon the barn builder, and a wagon maker. He had worked with tremendous energy until a time in the late 1870's when he became too crippled to work. The term "rheumatic sufferer" is used in the newspaper; Dickie described it as a callous hardening around the spinal nerve. In this state of forced inactivity, he repaired watches and turned to poetry as an outlet for his thoughts.

    "While in my strength and power and might,  
    I worked but light for Christ,  
So now I say the Lord doeth right;  
    In this way, His way, I'm best.

For now since He has me thus brought  
    Low down, in this weakness,  
He has in this, His way, me sought,  
    Lovingly in meekness.

Because, before 'twas quite a trial,  
    For me to make a rhyme,  
I'd have to think a good long while,  
    To even make a line.



It seems to me the poet power,  
Was held in dormant state,  
By worldly cares, so hard and sore,  
Enstamped on me till late.

And now, as it has been God's will,  
To grant me respite;  
I'll strive my best as now I feel,  
To warm the sinners right."



Richard "Dicky" Huffman and  
Mrs. Huffman

These verses are from a poem, "Introduction" that he wrote for a collection of his poems called The Pilgrim's Poem. His verses were usually about his friends; a few titles are: "Sarah J. Morton, near Vanceville", "Bereaved Relatives", "My Wife's Parents", and "A.S. Tinley, near Bentleysville".

Mr. Huffman made his living by selling his books; Harry McClain drove him around the country in a wagon which Harry referred to as "the hearse". His recovery occurred while he was visiting near Glyde at the home of John Wonsettler. He had crawled behind a haystack to pray, and as he affirmed his faith in God's power to heal he felt his infirmities leave him. Some of his contemporaries wink and say he was chased by a bull; but his sudden recovery remains a miracle in either case. Dickie was so overjoyed by his returned health, he felt compelled to spread his story

of faith, and he did visit almost every church in the county. Eventually he entered the Methodist ministry and devoted the rest of his life to Christian service.

Richard Huffman's recovery brought him nation-wide notice as we discovered by reading a letter written by Isaac Newkirk

from Kansas City, Missouri. Isaac had become a real estate agent and in his letter is advising Mr. Stephens and his brother, J. Alexander Newkirk, about their mid-western property.

Kansas City, Mo. 22nd '82

J.W. Stevens

Dear Bro, I received yours containing draft for \$218.00 in due time, thanks, we are all in our usual good health and pretty busily employed, are having most beautiful weather pleasant as May, nothing out of the usual we see here all day and hurry and the City looming up in great proportions. The classes of buildings going up here now would do credit to Chicago or St. Louis and there seems to be no let up on account of the meanness of winter—you inquire of the propriety of entering suit against the R.R.Co. in our behalf. To this I answer that we do not deem it very advisable to incur any expense unless insured by attorneys that judgment can be had, and then that the company have assets that are tangible. am afraid after knowing what I do, as to the outcome of that institution that it would be throwing good money after bad. however, would be glad to smoke them out if we were reasonably sure we could but have no notion of trying an experiment for the whole neighborhood at our own expense. Certainly many farms are in the same fix and if one is good all are. Therefore any action taken should be in concert, all along the line as to expenses. Merely experimental, these are my views in short, but would be glad to hear any word at any time that you might deem advisable as throwing light upon the prospect of prosecutions. please give J. Alex my views and say that I will answer his last before very long, if nothing providential prevents, also say that I sent a K.C. paper to Quip with a marked note about "the sudden recovery of Richard Huffman in answer to prayer". Of course we do not believe it but are curious to hear how such an item could stray away out here into our daily papers. let the first one that writes, tell us something if they can. give my regards and sympathy to Jane in her affliction, and to all enquirers, hoping to hear from you oftener in the future. I am as ever

Yours,

Issac Newkirk

If J. Alexander Newkirk had gone west as he had once planned, his son Clyde might never have become a famous author and



Newton Newkirk with a pet bear that was to be the first animal in the Boston Zoo.

humorist; and Bentleyville at least, would have lost one claim to fame. As it happened, Alex was not well and did not take the venture, and Jane Hopkins Newkirk was a widow soon enough. Clyde as a boy had a flare for writing, and he developed his talent by writing news items for local weeklies; he practised first on the Monongahela Republican. He earned his national fame with his satire of the rural press and country life which he dubbed the Bingville Bugle. The name "Bingville" was coined by the author; it is safe to say that his home town influenced the title and was a basis for the contents; although his characters were drawn from his imagination; The "Bugle" was a full sheet of humorous articles and cartoons and it was syndicated from the year 1903 to 1919 as a Sunday feature in

such papers as the Boston Post and Pittsburgh Dispatch. Clyde changed his name to Newton Newkirk early in his career, and it is by that name that he is remembered as the author of the "All Sorts" column in the Boston Post and as a sports writer. Newton Newkirk once wrote an article for the Ohio State Journal, and in it we can get a very brief look at Bentleyville as he saw it in the 1880's.

BOSTON SUNDAY POST, AUGUST 4, 1918

<p><b>ADVERTISE IN THE BUGLE</b></p> <p>Have you got something to sell or lease? Do you want to see something?</p> <p><b>THIRTY A DAY WITH US</b></p> <p>Bugle &amp; only newspaper in this end of the Co. Advertising rates furnished with great cheer. Specimens, books come to anybody.</p> <p><b>YOU'LL HATE TO TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT</b></p>	<p style="font-size: small;">Copyrighted 1918, by E. A. Greene</p>	<p><b>DON'T BE A TITENWAB!</b></p> <p>Pay up your back subscription to the Bugle &amp; thus fill a long-felt want on our part.</p> <p><b>WE CAN'T RUN A FIRST CLASS NEWSPAPER ON HOT AIR &amp; COLD POTATOES.</b></p> <p>P. S.—If we are not in leave the money with our wife's next door.</p>
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Heading of Newton Newkirk's Syndicated Humor Page



VOL. XXVII—No. 30.

## THE BINGVILLE BUGLE!!!

Is the Leading Paper of the County.

BRIGHT, BREEZY, BELLICOSE, BUSTLING



Published every Saturday when possible.  
Subscription price, \$1.00 per year, payable in advance,  
or four years for \$3.50.

How doth the busy little bee  
Improve each shining hour—  
From every creaking door.

The cheapest advertising medium in the  
country. If you believe in advertising, come  
and place your advertisement in the  
address: BINGVILLE, N.Y.

Last week we published a big sub-  
scription offer in big type offering the  
Bingville Bugle from that date until  
Dec. 15—1904 for the price of one an-  
nual subscription—(42.)—thus giving  
the subscriber the paper four months  
free.

We stated furthermore that unless  
we could raise some ready cash with-  
in the ensuing 10 days the Bugle would  
likely be obliged to suspend publica-  
tion for a week or two.

In response to this fervent appeal  
we received just \$2., representing one  
subscriber who told us he intended  
to subscribe anyhow.

We have now been  
editor and pro-  
prietor of the Bingville for 27 years.

In that period the Bugle has seen

ity and quantity of news in this issue!  
of the Bugle.

## Awtul Big Fire

**Turrible Conflagration Near  
Bingville!—No Lives Lost but  
the Exsitement Was Extrem!  
The Bingville Fire Dept Re-  
sponded Prompt bnt What  
Was the Use?—Thrilling Par-  
ticklers Below!**

There was a turrible awful hollvcanst  
not sitch a great ways from Bingville  
last Wednesday which raged all day  
and a part of the night the memory of  
which will forever flourish like a  
green bay tree with them as witnessed  
it which included every man woman  
child and dog in our midst.

Lem Brown one of our most re-  
spectable citizens was the 1st one to  
discover the fire. Lem is a awful  
erly riser and last Wednesday morning  
Lem riz up about 3 a. M. as usual  
and the first thing he done after he  
got his pants on was to walk out the  
back kitchen door and start for the  
pump to wash his face. As Lem was  
walkin along in the dim gray dawn

neerly haf asleep he thort he smelt  
somethink burning and he stopt in  
his tracks and begin to sniff and pfe-  
sionly he looked up & to his horrifi-  
cashion he seen that there was a fur-  
est fire on the top of Sawridge Moun-  
tain about five miles away in a bee  
line.

Soon as Lem seen this he run outen  
the yard and started down Main at  
hollerin "Fire! Fire!" as loud as he  
could holler. In two shakes every-  
body in Bingville was pouring outen  
their houses and into the st. Some  
of em took time to dress and others  
of em didnt take time to only half  
dress and as a result several wasnt  
skereedly in to he saw in public.

Soon as Jase Tucker Chief of the  
Bingville Fire Dept heard the alarm  
he out and rushed to the Town Hall  
basement where the fire pails is kept  
but when he arrove he found to his  
disgust that he had left the key to  
the basement hangin in the kitchen he-  
hind the stove at home so he rushed  
back agin and when he returned with  
the key the other brave fire lighters  
was there and when each got a water  
pail they all started down st running  
as hard as they could untill they was  
all outen breth when Jase suddintly  
plappend to think that it mite be a  
good idee to inquire where the fire  
was so they all rushed back to where  
the crowd was and when Jase found  
that the fire as up on Sawridge Moun-  
tain he told his brave followers that  
being as the fire was so far away and  
no water on top of the mountain any-  
how theyd haf to jest let the fire  
burn.

The flames was by this time beyant  
control and everybuddy stood there  
in the st looking at the awful con-  
flagration helples and awed & pow-  
erless to do nothink. Business was

I have a horse which I will sell at private sale, if I can get my price. He is a roan, stands 13 hands high, has a touch of the bay, his legs having a tawny and ringed behind. Other parts as sound as a dollar and gentle as a lamb to any woman or child can drive him. The price I ask is \$10. Not a cent less will buy him.  
**DRAGON LAKENWOOD.**

Best understood one of Bienville's old and most respected citizens is lying at death's door from a complication of diseases, the principal one of which is old age. Mr. L. J. Boudreau, 70 years old, has been ill for some time, but during the last week, it has been so long that he would have rounded out his 81 years longer he would have done so. He is now in the hospital, but he is not ill enough to be pulled through. He could be a frugal and abstemious life. He could have been persuaded to drink anything but brandy, but he has not. He is a member of the Bienville Club, and has a number of friends, also six children, all of whom are married or dead. Deceased was a veteran of the rebellion and saved the day at the battle of Vicksburg. He was a good man, and a good citizen. He will be greatly missed by every body.

that Resin was liable to die any minute, we thought the above obituary notice in type last Thursday and have been waiting patiently for Mr. Underwood to drop over ever since. Up to the hour of going to press, however, we were able to sit up in bed and seemed to be steadily improving. We hope to be on our feet by the first of the next week.

I desire to inform my friends that I have recently bought

which I will be pleased to show anyone wishing anything in my line. Two are of walnut and the third is maple. It is a pleasure to life in one of these caskets.

**COME EARLY AND AVOID THE HUSH!**  
**FIRST COME, FIRST FRIVED!**  
**DAVE WHITE,**  
**UNDERTAKER.**

Epob getting up last Friday morning I discovered that I had lost seven chickens sometime during the night. The thief who stole these chickens was seen, and if they were promptly returned in good shape, or paid for, nothing will be said. Otherwise the guilty party will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

SAMUEL NICKS.

Just as we go to press we are told that Mrs. Johnnie Hilderbrand gave birth to a 10-pound child yesterday. Being very busy at this time, we were unable to verify this report, but it is not true there is no child named Johnnie.

Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Lind, 216 Broadway, are expecting a baby, and it was also failed to learn whether the new arrival is a boy or a girl, but presume it is a girl.

As most of the others are, Welch next week's luck for a full account of this infant's sex.

ted up a Barber Shop  
over Melancthon Skinner's

AND AM NOW PREPARED  
TO CUT HARE, SHAVE and  
SHAMPOO THE PUBLIC  
WHICH I WILL DO AT REA-  
SONABLE RATES.

and am ready for you all.  
*Give Me a Chance!*  
HARVEY HINES

**IMPORTANT NOTICE-**  
The Barber Shop will be open  
on **SATURDAYS ONLY UNTIL**  
**FURTHER NOTICE.** I am helping  
**LENN ROBINSON** harvest the rest of

[illegible]

Jed Peters who for the last several years has taught the Bingville school with great intelligence and success, having learned his pupils more than they would of otherwise known, opened the Bingville school last Monday morning or the fall and winter term. There was six scholars present exclusive of the teacher.

It must be a great comfort to be able to spread and diffuse knowledge as Jesus did in the world.



"I arrived on a farm near Bentleyville, Washington County, Pennsylvania. Didn't know whether I'd stay for the first three years or so—whoopin' cough, croup and things. Was forced into school at the tender age of 7 years, had to traipse over a mile across farms to get there. The teacher couldn't pound much through my head, so he tried to pound it through elsewhere, but without success.

"When I was 8 years old the folks moved into the city (Bentleyville—150 inhabitants and a blacksmith's shop), where I learned to run when other boys wanted to fight. Sometimes they caught me and I got another lickin' when I arrived home.

"Old Pigeon 'crick' used to flow past Bentleyville; I believe it does yet, and I'd like to be back there sprawled on the bank with a 'willer' pole danglin' out over the sunfish hole.

"When I was 13, I sent news items from Bentleyville to the Monongahela Republican, the nearest weekly, nine miles away. I kept the anxious public posted about all the newly-born calves and other thrilling happenings of the neighborhood. When I was 16 I did my first actual newspaper work for the Washington (Pa.) Reporter at \$3 a week. I paid my board bill and other expenses, out of that amount, and then squandered the balance on riotous living. I often look back on those spendthrift days and deplore my extravagance. I worked on the Reporter only a few months because the management could not afford to employ such high-priced talent.

"When I was 18 I taught a country school one term at Clover Hill, four miles from Bentleyville, but didn't like it. I had to study too hard to keep up with the advance arithmetic class.

"When my school term was out I went to Mt. Union College at Alliance, Ohio, where I worked on the Alliance Daily Review at Intervals during my course. After five years at hard labor I was graduated in 1893, to the great surprise of my friends and the members of the faculty, who wondered how I did it.

"Upon leaving college, I went to Pittsburgh to show the editors there how to run a city newspaper, but I was so nearly starved to death before I got a job that I hadn't the heart to do it. I worked on the Pittsburgh Post two years, and thereafter on the Times and Dispatch in turn.

"In 1893 I went to Canal Dover, O., and bought a small interest in a country weekly there, with which I was connected over three years. From Canal Dover I first began to send



'pomes' and other things to the Ohio State Journal. I probably saved my life many times in sending them by mail.

"I am now a resident of the Hub and responsible for the All Sorts column in the Boston Post. Scarcely a day passes that I do not revenge myself on 300,000 readers."

In 1882, when Clyde was twelve, the third attempt was made to build a railroad near Pigeon Creek. The Ohio & Baltimore Short Line Railway Co. that had started a decade ago to build a road across the country was reorganized and a route, slightly altered from the original was surveyed. This new line passed south of town through the West Farm, past Coal Center, went across the river and connected with the B. & O. at Layton Station. This proposed route would make it possible for travelers to go West to Wheeling without taking the long river or train trip through Pittsburgh. Engineers had begun to dig a tunnel through Peterman's Hill when the work was again suspended. The common belief was that powerful persons from Pittsburgh or the Pennsylvania Railroad or both secured the suspension from fear that valuable trade would bypass Pittsburgh.

For some reason the farmers and citizens of this borough became impatient about their mail service. It is hard to explain because as Mr. Joe Nicholls tells it, the farmers would ride into town only once a week to pick up their newspaper and mail, so they would not ask for daily delivery at the Post Office. The villagers must have become conscious of their own importance.

Post Office Department  
Office of the Second Assistant  
Postmaster General  
Washington D.C. Apr. 5th 1882

Sir:

Referring to the petition of citizens, favorably endorsed and submitted by you to this office, praying that service on route No. 8771, Monongahela City to Beallsville, be increased to six times a week, I have the honor to inform you that the present service (tri weekly) is maintained at a cost of \$156 per annum, while the revenues derived from the offices dependent upon it, viz; Bentleyville and Fallowfield, amount to but \$42 annually; in view of which facts the department is constrained to decline ordering the increase prayed for.

Respectfully,  
R.O. Elmer

Rep. W. S. Shallenberger

A local boy, Hiram Hetherington, was teaching at Elizabeth and had become bewitched by a young lady teacher. His father Abraham, nevertheless, forbade a marriage between Hiram, a Methodist and Elizabeth Barton, a Catholic. Abraham Hetherington was a "shouting" Methodist at the Newkirk Church, and he also had a reputation for ruling with an iron hand at home. He had discouraged all of his daughters' suitors and the three died unmarried. Hiram took his personal tragedy hard, and he began to lose his health. He was so depressed, his father was forced to agree to the marriage and so in 1885, Hiram brought Lizzie, his bride, to Bentleyville. Hiram remained a Methodist and taught in the Sunday School. Lizzie took the children to church in Monongahela. H.L. Hetherington taught in our public schools for forty-eight years. He taught without raising his voice, his classrooms were noted for their order and cleanliness. After his many years of public service he moved to Pittsburgh and before his death, to the surprise of his Methodist friends, he was converted to Catholicism.

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The Cumberland Presbyterians were able to build a church in town in 1884. For modern Presbyterians who have forgotten or have never heard of this branch of the Presbyterian Church that founded the present church in Bentleyville, a brief paragraph on their history may be interesting. The Cumberland division broke from the parent church during and over the Great Revival of 1800. The "old style" church distrusted the sincerity of the revival leaders and converts and drove them from their churches. The "revival" congregations in the Cumberland valley of Tennessee formed an independent church government and were called "Cumberland Presbyterians". Further differences arose to separate the churches, a major one being the training of ministers. The new church, putting less emphasis on a classical education, commissioned laymen to spread the Word in the wilderness among pioneers who rarely saw clergymen. Also, besides hymn singing, energetic preaching and mourner's benches, points of Presbyterian doctrine were disputed; the Cumberlands had reservations about predestination. In following years the Cumberland missionaries entered other states in the Middle West and established churches even in Western Pennsylvania, an area dense with Scotch Presbyterians. They established colleges (Waynesburg) and seminaries

(Carmichals) and as the conditions which were conducive to the early revivals disappeared the church became more conservative. In the meantime, the parent church came to accept the liberal doctrine of the Cumberlands, and a real union was formed in this century, in 1906.

The pastors of the Greenfield (Coal Center) Cumberland Church had been preaching in Bentleysville nearly twenty years, sometimes in the Methodist Church. Finally in 1883, Rev. W.F. Silveus organized the fund raising for a church that cost \$1200. The original elders were O.T. McElhinny, Barnett Hill, and David Mitchell. The charter members who enrolled on March 9 1884 aside from the elders were: Elizabeth McElhinny, Elizabeth Iams, James Gibson, Isabel Gibson, Anna Gibson, Elizabeth Hill, Susanna Mitchell, A.S. Tinley, Jemima Tinley, Thomas Elwood, Rachel Elwood, Mary Holmes, E.T. Van Voorhis, Julia Bell, Olive Scott, Mary A. Weaver, and Catherine Crawford. Three days later the following new members united with the church. George Newkirk, Elizabeth Newkirk, Lydia Ferguson, Hallie Gibson, O.T. Tinley, Thomas Richardson, Harry B. Leyda, Melia McGiffin, Clara J. Elwood, Sadie Hill, Mary McGiffin, D.J. Jennings, Adam S. Huffman, Tressie Hill, George M. Leyda, Mary Van Voorhis, Anna Tinley, Ora Newkirk, M.C. Newkirk, James Sprowls, Laura Gibson, and Macellus Black.

Dr. Scott was tiring from the strain of his practice here; therefore by the end of the eighties he was looking for a young doctor to take his place. It must have been the custom then, as it still is in many rural areas, for young doctors to get their initial experience in a small village and when a reputation was established then to move to a larger town or the county seat. Dr. Scott was only forty when he left and Dr. Leyda had been younger than that. Dr. Scott's successor was Edward Everett French, M.D., a twenty-three year old Prosperity boy fresh from Jefferson Medical College. When he located here, he took over a field that spread from Maple Creek half way to Washington. This and his first bout with the annual fall typhoid epidemic convinced him that it was too much for one man. He set about persuading his boyhood friend, classmate, and new brother-in-law, Alexander Nelson Booth to help him. Dr. "Nels" Booth had established himself in Mt. Union, Pa., and in his first year had already performed his first amputation. Older doctors had been present but the custom was then to let the youngest doctor, who had the least to loose, operate. The patient was propped up "so the pus would run down". The case, previously deemed hopeless, proved fatal.

Dr. Booth brought his bride to Bentleysville in June of 1889.



Leah was taken to the Crouch Hotel that first day, and it is remarkable that (sixty years later) Mrs. Booth's recollection of the occasion concerned the innkeeper's daughter, Joella Crouch. She remembers Joella as the prettiest little girl she had ever seen. This recollection is part of a coincidence, because over the same number of years, Mrs. Joella Harris distinctly remembers the visit of Mrs. Booth for she was the loveliest lady she had ever seen, and she remembers that the doctor's wife noticed her admiration and smiled at her.

The couple moved into Dr. Scott's house, between Mr. McElhinny and "Grandma" Newkirk (on the same lot as Mrs. Booth's present home). On their lot was a long building that housed the doctor's office, drug store, and for some years, the postoffice. The stable for the doctor's sulky and three horses was behind the house. The house was close to the street; close enough for the wagons to splash mud on the front windows. It was a two story hewn log structure that had been weatherboarded. Mr. Willison Kerr had lived there before Dr. Scott and had taken in travelers.

These doctors, as well as those earlier in our history, worked under conditions that seem intolerable to us. Travel was always a problem; the horses had to be cared for and that would mean a stable man or many hours of the doctor's time. Dr. Booth generally drove a sulky; in bad weather he would travel his circuit on foot and stop overnight along the route. Modern



Dr. and Mrs. Booth, with Sevilla and John, in front of their home on Main Street.

doctors might sometimes wish they could take a long walk or sulky ride in the country, but generally the country folks would not call a doctor until the case was an emergency and the doctor had reason to hurry. Pregnant women almost never discussed prenatal care with a doctor; he often did not know a woman was an expectant mother, until he was called to deliver the baby. An eighteen year old boy, Burt Cooper, once came to get Dr. Booth because he said, his mother had cholera morbus (stomach ache). The doctor arrived in time for the delivery. Of the two doctors, Dr. French most enjoyed the role of dentist; he had a jar of teeth in his office to prove it. Money was scarce on the farms, and it was not uncommon for the doctors to receive chickens, pork, corn, and hay and grain for their horses as fees. One spring morning, May 14, in 1890, young Charley Crawford tore down Main Street from the Washington road and ran straight to Dr. Booth's door. His message was that he had gone to the Crouch farm to return a tool but could not raise any of the family by his knocking. Looking in the kitchen window, he saw old John Crouch on the floor, dead.

The boy was right, and a search of the farm house revealed the bodies of Mrs. Crouch and their invalid son, Andrew. The aged couple and their middle-aged son had received crushing blows on the head; the murderer had used a fence rail. The farm house, a half mile from town, had been ransacked; and since the Crouch's were known to keep money in the house, money was apparently the motive for the murder. A crowd and the coroner quickly appeared on the scene. The conclusion of the inquest, that an unknown person or persons committed the crime, quickly reached the grand jury then in session in Washington. They recommended that a reward of one thousand dollars be offered for the apprehension and conviction of the murderer or murderers.

The terrible deed stirred up no small amount of excitement. The funeral attracted three thousand friends and spectators from several counties. Rev. D. A. Cooper of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church conducted the service, and Frank Milliken was the undertaker. With three hearses the funeral was one of the most impressive ever held in this community.

Immediately county detectives began working on the clues they had found. It was only three days after the murder and two days after the bodies were found that the police had enough circumstantial evidence to arrest William West, a twenty-four year old local negro boy who had worked for the Crouches. He was arrested in Beaver Falls at the Nickle Plate Restaurant with a white woman. After a hearing in Monongahela City, they



were committed to the Washington jail to await trial. The grand jury returned a true bill against West for murder in the first degree, and a trial was set for October 6. The court appointed Messrs. H.J. Vankirk and J.M. Patterson to defend the accused, and the district attorney William Parker was assisted by M.L.A. McCracken and H.M. Stevenson. Judge McIlvaine was related to the Crouches, so Judge Stowe of Allegheny County presided.

William West was one of the sixteen children of John and Sophie West, a respected family in this locality. Their home was on Peterman's hill on the Beallsville road. Bill had attended the Bentleysville school and had worked for Mr. White at the mill as well as for the Crouch family. He was tall and very strong, he saved his money and had a good reputation. In the trial the prosecuting attorney attempted to show that the motive for the robbery was West's desire to run away with the woman since his family would not accept her. Bill was familiar with the Crouch household and being refused money he resorted to violence. The circumstantial evidence was impossible to ignore. Bill's shoes fit the tracks that were found around the house. Several women in the country saw him crossing the fields on the way to Monongahela. In Monongahela, Bill was broke the day before the murder; Anne had to borrow money to eat. The next day, Bill had plenty of money and showed it. They spent the night in a boarding house, and the next day left for Pittsburgh and Beaver Falls where they were arrested.

The trial lasted a week and in spite of the defendant's plea of innocence the jury promptly returned a guilty verdict on Saturday morning, October 11. A new trial was denied, and the governor set February 26 as the date for the execution. The woman died in prison before her trial came up.

William West swore that he would never hang, and he nearly succeeded in his effort. Twice within twenty-four hours he attempted suicide, first with a rusty nail in the jugular vein and then with poison. Twice Doctors Scott and Acheson saved him for the gallows. The next day, February 26th, West was so unmanageable he was given morphine and chloroform, strapped to a board and carried to the gallows unconscious.

Over one hundred tickets had been issued by Sheriff Lockhart to men who were curious to see the hanging. Tom White felt himself fortunate because he had just turned twenty-one and was eligible for a ticket. They saw the black cap and the rope adjusted on the drugged victim who was still strapped to the board, and the trap sprung. As an anticlimax to these dreadful series of events, the rope broke, and the act had to be repeated.



William West was buried in the Little Zion A.M.E. Church burying ground in Centerville.

The pride and joy of a country village was a brass band. Doctor French had played in the Prosperity band, and he with Tom White and Fin Bedsworth organized the Bentleyville Cornet Band. Professor Burke, in the winter at least, came from the county seat to train the muscians. Band practice was held in the school until the school officials complained about the arrangement; the band then moved across the street to Mr. Bentley's office. Their repertoire included nothing but marches; Tom White, who played solo cornet, recalls "World's Fair" to have been his favorite. The cornets played the melody and the alto and tenor horns played the "after time". Professor Burke taught the band as a whole and did not give individual lessons.



Bentleyville Band in Front of Old Methodist Church. First row: Ad Crawford, Morton Kiehl, Paul Gibson, Oliver White, Harry Crawford, Tom White. Second row: Bert Cooper, Charles Scott, Harry Kiehl, Clyde Dague, James Huffman, De Walt Kiehl, Henry Frye, Frank Jones, Finley Bedsworth, Dr. E.E. French.

At practice, he would teach new pieces by instructing the sections in their respective parts. New recruits could sit in on a rehearsal and play with the band without ever having any previous training. Young Clyde Dague was given an alto horn, shown a few notes and told to play along with the band. By the end of his first rehearsal his lips were so swollen no air could get through, but he was already a member of the band. The

group was glad to play for any occasion; they seldom traveled but played near home. National holidays were big events, the band played at all Fourth of July and Memorial Day celebrations, G.A.R. reunions and large parties such as the one described in this newspaper column.

#### "Tenth Anniversary

Early in the day on Tuesday, Oct. 24 (1893), people began to arrive at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. W.F. Richardson, of Bentleyville, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of their marriage. The day being one well-suited for such an occasion, the guests comfortably seated under the shade of the trees in front of the beautiful residence, were for sometime very highly entertained by music by the Bentleyville Cornet Band; dinner being announced a procession was formed headed by the band, marched to and were seated at the ten large and well filled tables, arranged on the spacious lawn surrounding the house. After Rev. J.C. Burnsworth had returned thanks all (about one hundred couples) ate with a genuine relish the bountiful dinner spread before them prepared by Mrs. Richardson kindly assisted by lady friends of the village.

After dinner was over Miss Sadie Jones, of Homestead entertained the assembly by reciting several poems which were loudly applauded. Rev. J.C. Burnsworth, on behalf of the donors, with well chosen language presented the following presents: Teakettle - Miss Emma Weaver; centre piece - Mr. and Mrs. Piersol; table cover - Misses Annie and Kate Miller; manicure set - Mr. and Mrs. Charles Nicholson; table cover - Prof. and Mrs. Tombaugh; china plate and napkin rings - Mr. and Mrs. D.A. Williams; set of glass ware - Mr. and Mrs. Greer Smith; silver pepper and salt box - Mr. and Mrs. Hill; salad tray - Mrs. and Dr. Clark; flower vase and linen towels - Mr. and Mrs. S. Mills; water set - Mr. and Mrs. James Jones; china cuspidore - Mr. and Mrs. A.S. Tinley; fruit press - Mrs. M.C. Mitchell; Austrian card receiver - Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Emery; flower vase - Mrs. R. Hill; agate teapot - Mr. and Mrs. A. Moore; china tea set - Mr. Sprowls and sister, Mr. and Mrs. H. Scott, Mr. and Mrs. J. Sprowls, and Mrs. Elmira Robinson and son; fancy mirror - Misses Jennie and Mary Dawson; vase and plate, peach blow china - Mr. and Mrs. Winfield; roasting and pudding pans - Mrs. and Mrs. Adam Ferguson; plate, cup and saucer of Queen Elizabeth style - Mr. and Mrs. Sam

Ross; linen towels - Mr. and Mrs. Sam Craft; silver cake basket - Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Jones; granite kettle - Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Kohl; glass fruit dishes with flowers - Miss Olie Baker; galvanized bowl and pitcher - Mr. and Mrs. Henry McDonough; dress pattern - Mrs. Vernon; hand painted wall pocket - Mrs. R.E. Richardson, granite kettle - Mr. and Mrs. H.B. Leyda; wall pockets - Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Duvall; fancy plush rocker - Mrs. Susan West and daughters; wall pocket, antique oak - Mrs. Geo. Braden; large china fruit plate - S.W. Huffman and wife; hand painted vase - Miss Bertie Jones; damask table cover - Mr. and Mrs. Connell; Teacher's Bible - Mr. T.J. Vernon; money - Mrs. A.J. McCormick, Mr. and Mrs. Geo Kiehl, Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Richardson.

Hall rack and dinning chairs, antique oak of modern pattern, and bedspread - Rev. J.C. Burnsworth and wife, Rev. D.A. Cooper and wife, B.M. Crouch and wife, J.F. White and wife, A.S. Huffman and wife, T.G. Fry and wife, C.K. Fry and wife, R.L. Hetherington and wife, A.D. Byers and wife, J.G. McCormick and wife, W.J. Weaver and wife, F.A. Shape and wife, J.G. McCormick and wife, W.J. Weaver and wife, Abe Sprowls and wife, George Rehard and wife, David Mitchell, wife and son, F.E. Bedsworth and wife, Harry Leyda and wife, M.L. Grubb and wife, Noah Jones and wife, S.K. Orr and G.M. Snyder, Wm. and Mary Holmes, Robt. and Maggie Johnson, H.C. Crouch and wife, silver molasses cruet - Mr. and Mrs. Myers.

Mr. Richardson, in a very touching manner thanked one and all for the presents received.

F.M."



## Chapter 10

### REMINISCENCES—VISIT AT CROUCH HOTEL— CAMPMEETING—NEW METHODIST CHURCH—LOCAL COLOR

In the twenty years that had passed since the borough was formed, the original number of citizens had increased by only sixty persons. The town was a stable rural community of retired farmers and business and professional men who served the farmers in this valley. In the next decade, events occurred which upset this pattern of rural life that had prevailed since the town was founded. The population increased in the next ten years from 360 to 613 persons and in the following ten years to 2200 persons. These events will be described in the following chapters, but first before the industrial revolution starts, we will take a last look at "Bentley's Ville". There are several people we can tell about and customs and events we can mention which will bring back a flood of memories to people who were there.

Hardly anyone but Tom White would remember when he drove his father to Redd's Mill every morning when Hollingsworth Hout was ill. You may remember that "Holly" Hout had been the miller in Bentleysville before Mr. White bought the mill from Isaac Newkirk. When he left, he moved his large family down the creek to Redd's Mill. The income from this mill was meager; so when the miller took sick, his family had reason to worry. It was John White who saved this family; he left his own mill in trusted hands, and personally, supervised the grinding of Miller Hout's grain. However, if Mr. White's deeds are remembered, so are those of his wife. Mrs. White was the most sought-after nurse and midwife in this community. Her kindness and gentle care are still remembered; she was the doctor's favorite assistant.

There are very few people living now who remember O. T. McElhinny, his jolly nature and long white beard, but as with most men he has left a mark. The McElhinnys had no children, but they were able to help raise several young people of the community. The first was an orphan girl, Jemmima Wilson, whom they raised and gave in marriage to Abraham S. Tinley.

Jemmima remembered her benefactor when she named a son - Oliver Thomas Tinley. The childless couple later boarded a niece, Martha Belle McElhinny so that she could attend our schools. When Martha Belle married, she and her husband, Calvin Keys Frye, stayed on with the old couple, and in time Mr. Frye took over the management of the store. Martha had only one child, Oliver McElhinny Frye.

Joella Crouch, school mate of "Ollie" Frye's has given us a description of her own home, her school and some of her childhood experiences. As a little girl, Joella Crouch lived in her father's hotel and could observe what little movement there was in town. She told us,

"Business in this small town was not very brisk and sometimes days would pass without lodgers or travelers stopping for meals. But during the Bentleyville Camp meetings, my parents reaped their harvest for they would serve hundreds of meals during the ten days of camp. For five years they operated the hotel on the camp grounds in connection with the Bentleyville hotel. The hotel was famous for its turkey dinners served at fifty cents per plate. That included everything that goes with a turkey dinner. Good home cooked food. People came from miles around, and the hotel was filled to capacity with guests.

"The hotel contained ten rooms originally. In later years my father added four rooms on the south side, two up and two down. This wing made a large space between the old and new rooms which we used as a 'back porch' and over this, two rooms were added, which made sixteen all together. From the front entrance we entered a small hall with steps leading to the second story. On the right, the room was used for the office. On the left, the first room was the sitting room, and the next to this the parlor. Back of the office was the large dining room and next to that the kitchen. The dining room floor was built of wide oak boards probably 10 or 12 inches wide. We used this floor without covering, keeping it clean by scrubbing. I remember the first covering we had was rag carpet. It had a brown background with white strips and border. My mother was always telling us to 'walk on the brown' so as to keep the white from soiling.

"We had traveling men who came to town to sell to the stores, and they always had dinner (at noon) with us. My mother would cook their favorite dishes; for we always knew when to expect them. One of the men and my little sister about five years old were great friends. He was interested in Arbucles products. One day as he was entering the dining

room my sister said, 'Mr. Murphy, walk on the brown.' My mother was so embarrassed and hastened to explain what she meant. Ever afterward he made an effort to always 'walk on the brown'.

"Now the kitchen was not very large and had no conveniences. One large coal stove was used for all the cooking and baking my mother had to do. She always had help but did most of the cooking except at Camp Meeting time. Then we had a first and second cook with extra help. We did a lot of work on the back porch.

"There was no large fireplace—just ordinary sized grates. We carried the coal in and the ashes out. Later, when gas was available, we had cabinet mantels and attractive fireplaces built in the office and sitting room. The parlor had a gas stove.

"On the second floor were eight bedrooms. Four contained two double beds, the others one double bed. Three rooms had open grates, one had a coal heating stove, and the others were without heat, except for a gas heating stove in the hall that gave off enough warmth for comfort. These rooms were occupied day and night. When the day-men went to work, the night-men went to bed. We had railroad engineers, carpenters, painters, and a transient trade consisting of officials of the Ellsworth Mines. My mother and father continued in the hotel until 1901 at which time they rented the building and reserved five rooms on the south side in which they lived.

"Across the street where the Post Office and those other buildings now stand, was the large stable where horses were quartered. They were watered at a large stone trough at the end of the porch, receiving its water from an old wood pump that pumped the water from the well. The porch was wide like the upper porch is now, but when they improved the street they found the porch was extending too far, so they cut it down.

"During the Camp Meeting, they used the streets and school grounds for parking. My father always had a stable-man who looked after the horses. During the rush season of Camp Meeting some man left his horse and buggy and a bottle of liquor in care of the stable-man, but when he came to claim his horse and buggy he found the liquor had disappeared, also the stable-man; they looked everywhere, but could not find him. It was well enough for that man was plenty angry. Someone told my father he saw the stable-man run up the steps to the second floor. After a search, he was found in a bed between a feather tick and a mattress, his head hanging down



from the side next to the wall. He was so frightened he promised my father never to do so again if only he'd promise to protect him from that man."

Away from this immediate vicinity, the name "Bentleysville" meant "camp meeting". In the borough, the camp meeting meant good business, the best of the year. The Crouch Hotel made enough during the period of camp meeting to tide it over the slack season between meetings. The rest of the townspeople enjoyed sitting on their front porches and watching the traffic on Main Street. On Sunday the spring wagons and buggies clogged all the roads that led to the grove, through town they were end to end. At the gate, Hiram Hetherington would be at his usual post taking tickets. The families who came year after year parked their wagons and tied their horses at the same spot each year and found the same families setting out picnic lunches around them. Between services the adults would visit with relatives and old friends that they hadn't seen since the year before. The younger generation enjoyed walking through the grove doing a little "sparking".

The campmeeting, however, could not be mistaken for a summer resort. The daily schedule of religious services would discourage the pleasure seeker. In the charter it said, "The purpose for which this corporation is formed, is the support of public worship and the promotion of holiness and heart purity and the advancement of all Christian graces without reference to class, creed, profession or nationality so as to unite in Christian fellowship all persons who may desire to enjoy freedom in the work of the Lord." The daily schedule commenced with an early prayer meeting. The first preaching service was from ten to noon, the second was in the early afternoon, and the third was at seven-thirty. In addition there would be special children's services, cottage prayer meetings and a young peoples meeting was at six-thirty, before the big evening meeting. This schedule was for every day of the week as well as for Sunday. The week-day program was attended chiefly by the families living in the cottages on the grounds. On Sunday, the churches in the valley would be closed and everyone attended the Bentleysville Campmeeting. The meetings themselves were marked by lusty singing of gospel songs, spirited preaching, testimonials and professions of faith.

The wheel horse of the organization was R. L. Jones. When the lease for the grove expired in 1890, and the interest in the old association (South Pittsburgh District Campmeeting Association) was waning, Robert Jones persuaded members of the Mountain Lake Park Association to help reorganize the meetings. A

stock company was chartered in 1812 with a capital of \$5000. James R. Blythe of Monongahela owned the majority of the stock. Mrs. Stephens sold the thirty acre grove to the association for \$3000. (In 1920, the coal was sold to the Union Coal and Coke Co. for \$15,015). The officers were R. L. Jones, president; Edwin Hazlett, secretary; Capt. George Neel, treasurer; and the Reverend J. P. McKee was the general superintendent of the annual meeting.

Bentleysville was also noted for its quality of public education at one time, but in 1890 there seems to have been a less concerted effort; at least, the school board received a good deal of criticism. Some of the controversy was carried on in the newspapers and



Bentleysville School in 1896

First row: Pearl Harlan, Nellie Sweeney, Mary Lewis, Lillian Crouch, Mable Frye, Harry Sweeney, Lizzie Sprowls, Everett Byers, Ruby Sharpnack, Boy?.

Second row: Charles Crawford, Oliver Frye, Boy?, Boy?, Wayne Richardson, Girl?, Hazel Frye, Myrtle Frye, Susan Frye, Barclay Richardson, Harry Richardson, Ben Cox, Charles Tinley.

Third row: Mrs. Clark (teacher), Blanche Byers, Stella Odbert, Alice Salters, Bess Tinley, Nellie Lewis, Joella Crouch, Ethel Richardson, Jessie Crawford, Sadie Jones, Adaire Richardson, Miss Roberta Jones (teacher).

Fourth row: Harry Crawford, Stephen Byers.

these two letters published in a local paper were found in an old scrapbook.

"Now that the old man himself has spoke his piece on our schools suppose I put my hooks in again and dish up some facts. During the time that these old chaps had children to go, we had good teachers such as Joseph Jennings; the school was large enough then for two rooms. There are just as many children now as then, the kid business has not stopped in Bentleysville any more than other places. But when their children got an education the old timers had no use for the schools, and so they cut down to reduce taxes. The school has been running gradually down. This is a fact—one end of the building is now rented out as a paint shop—a room that ought to be filled with pupils instead of white lead kegs. There are plenty of shildren to go if there was room for them, but its no use to send them to the present school when the teacher has to have several classes on the floor at one time to make room enough and to get through in time. The Directors know nothing of this, they don't visit the schools once a year—their only idea is to run things cheap, just as they run the roads; and they make the same out with both, no roads and no schools! They say in effect we don't care, our children are all too old to go, and we are all too old to have any more. He speaks of only one single man in the board, well, he is old enough to be married the Lord knows, and will soon be an old timer. Another was an old timer when he got married, and he will never have to spend any money for primers. The reason why McCormick and Lusk were not elected was because the fogies put their heads together, and reported these gentlemen, if elected would favor two rooms and do away with the paint shop, and build a much needed public hall and second story to the building. Of course that would have made the taxes higher—and that's the rub; that's what beat the two reform candidates. Lusk says he is no preacher, but if he had been elected school director, he would have had the Bible in the school and kept it there. A man who belongs to a party with two thirds of a majority and has to stand at the polls all day, is not so very popular or I know nothing about tick tacks. I am not the man who wanted the post office; neither am I the man who held Crouch's horse while he voted the Democratic ticket, but I am the same old

TICK TAX

Bentleysville Pa. February 27, 1890



March 3 -- As I read "Tick Tack's" latest effusion a complacent smile overspreads my face. I see he has engulfed himself in falsehood, while pretending to have been "fishing for facts". Figures won't lie. In 1872 Prof. Jennings and Mr. Huston taught our schools; we had then in our district nearly 100 children. In 1881 our two schools were consolidated into one by the Board namely J. F. White, James Jones, A. Tinley, R. L. Jones, H. Richardson and J. A. Newkirk by a unanimous vote. The children of all those directors were then attending school and the majority of the Board still patronize the school. Now we have only from 40 to 50 scholars. I hope these facts will stop the nine years howlings and false insinuations of a few who pay the least to support the school. To illustrate: One of the most foxy agitators never had any children to send, and only pays an occupation tax of one dollar and ten cents with five per cent off, and thirty cents road tax annually—not having a real or personal property.

I believe this gentleman deals in furs and would like to engage in the "feather business" so he may give more school-boys occupation.

Mr. Lusk is only a transient citizen here and I understand is not in favor of any additional expense. I would suggest to him, to visit the school (instead of sending notes to the teacher,) he will find as much Bible there now as there ever was.

The unoccupied room is very useful for election purposes, entertainments, etc. Tick Tacks would better say nothing about the voting business as one man, whom they call Johnnie, who can neither read nor write, they put through on regular Bourbon style.

What beautiful reformers!

#### JUSTICE

Mrs. Joella Harris remembers when she went to this school. She writes,

"The first school which I recall attending was in 1888. It was a rather small one story building containing two rooms of which only one room with one teacher accommodating all grades was in use. This building was located on the grounds where the Nicholl's Service is now situated. I remember there were only three pupils in the beginner's class, first grade, of which I was one. In the years that passed the attendance of the little one room school grew until it was necessary to employ another teacher. And thus, the one room school was enlarged to one of two classes. Later a new

building was erected on the old site, containing four rooms.

"The first school building was used for everything. It was here that the borough and county elections were held. That met with our approval since it meant a day's vacation from our classes. With its varied types of entertainment such as box socials, oyster suppers, Christmas trees, literary societies, spelling bees, hearings, law suits, political campaigns and plays by traveling troupes. This building presented a general public service to the people of the town.

"One of our most pleasant memories of these days was to be invited overnight to the home of some of the boys and girls who lived in the country. We would pop corn, make taffy, and even smoke corn silk. We would sleep in high feather beds which made our contentment complete. The next day, the mothers would pack our lunch so we could eat it at school and that was a real treat.

"We wore long hair and at night before we retired we could arrange it in tight braids all over our head, and in the morning comb it out and it would be so frizzy it was beyond control for days.

"Our other social activities included ice skating, sled riding and ball playing. Since our churches opposed dancing, we had 'play parties' where we were permitted to do the 'Minuet, Virginia Reel, and the Paul Jones' if we sang instead of having any kind of dance music played."

The attitude of the church toward dancing is illustrated in a Quarterly Report for the year 1892 by Rev. J. W. Baker, the Methodist minister of Monongahela City. He was discouraged by the spirit of his congregation.

"The young folks in the church and out of it, have given themselves in a great measure to frolickings and dancing -- They can smell a dance three months ahead and talk about it and prepare for it -- They shun Revival services for fear they might be brought under its influence. Some young folks belong to the Church, teach in the Sabbath School and dance at Balls with the ungodly and take the Sacrament of the Church in the house of the Lord and many of the parents seem not to lay these things to heart."

Reverend O. E. Watson in Bentleysville might not have had the same temptations to deal with; although some of the ladies did on occasion play card games. The town was too small to hide many sinful practices.

It was in 1893 during Reverend Watson's assignment here, that the present Methodist Church was built. The fund-raising



Guests at Mrs. Harrington's Anniversary Party

Left to right: Dillie White, Adaire Richardson, Nannie Crawford, Martha McCartney, Ethel Richardson, Joella Crouch at organ, Mrs. Booth, Mrs. A. J. McCormick, Bazzinia Jones.

and church construction was much more simple than we now experience. Early in the year, the trustees; John F. White, Jeremiah Sprowls, J. E. Richardson, Hudson Crouch, William McClain and R. L. Jones purchased lot No. 42 from Susan C. West for the sum of \$200. The old brick church was torn down and the stones in the old foundation were used by O. T. Tinley, the stonemason, in the new foundation. Harry McLain said, "The attic was ready to fall down, it was so full of Bob Jones' prayers." The new oak frame was furnished and sawed by John F. White at the mill. Demas Regester won the building contract and erected the new church in short order. Much of the labor was donated and the final cost of the structure was only \$3000. The new church was dedicated on September 10, 1893 free of debt.

A figure that has disappeared from our farm scene is the huckster. Ben Crouch was a huckster, and he also had a store across the road from the Crouch Hotel near the creek, Hudson was his younger half-brother. Every Monday he drove his large covered huckster wagon through the farm lands of Washington and Greene Counties. From the farmers he bought everything he could resell—meat, chickens, fruit and vegetables. When his wagon was full he drove it to Pittsburgh and sold his produce in the farmer's market. This circuit took several days. Ben's





Lavinia Jones' Daughters Entertain Their Mother's Friends

First row: (left to right) Mrs. Adam Ferguson, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Greer Smith,

Second row:   ?  , Mrs. Joseph Snyder, Mrs. Sara Richardson Ross, Mrs. Lavinia Jones, Mrs. John White, Mrs. Tom Frye.

Third row: Mrs. Roberta Jones Crouch, Ben Crouch, Mrs. Bazzenia Jones Darroch.

first wife, Zedenia Grable, is remembered by her contemporaries, but unfortunately they only remember that she weighed three hundred pounds. Ben's second wife was Roberta "Bertie" Jones, a daughter of Lavinia and R. L. Jones, and a teacher in our public school. Bertie Crouch shared her family's interest in education and was always active in programs that were for the instruction of youth. Her sister, Belle Jones Piersol, later served on the school board, and both sisters helped many promising students advance their education.

A drug store, doctor's office and post office could be found in a small building behind Dr. Booth's house. The brothers-in-law shared the drug business and the doctor's office, but they alternated as postmasters. Dr. Booth was a Democrat and Dr. French a Republican so when the administration changed in

Washington, the doctors changed over. The drug store was a favorite loafing place for the young men who had nothing to do in the evening. The young proprietors often kept the store open till nine and sold tobacco to the boys. The room during these evening sessions was usually blue with smoke.

A third young doctor came here in 1890, Dr. Charles Farquhar. His fate was that of many strangers to this community. In the fall of 1891, he succumbed to typhoid fever. The carrier of this disease was unknown, but it was noticed that newcomers were more susceptible to the disease. Some people thought it was harbored in stagnant water around the weeds that bordered the creek, and they were cut down. Also, wells that seemed contaminated were condemned. Nevertheless, each fall typhoid fever could be expected.

Mrs. E. E. French, the doctor's wife, caused a small sensation one day when she appeared on the road in black bloomers riding a bicycle. Sportswomen generally exercised in their long skirts, never thinking of wearing trousers like the men folk or riding bicycles. Sadie French was the first to test the public opinion and wear the new bloomers. At all times she dressed in the height of fashion, her friends can still picture her stiff taffeta leg-of-mutton sleeves.

Another sportswoman, Juliana McCormick, was a common figure in town riding her favorite horse, on a side saddle. The arrival of the McCormick family in Bentleysville has not been recorded yet although for some time the A. J. McCormicks had been living here. You will recall the brick farm house that Shesh. B. Richardson built at the north end of town; it was here that Amanda B. Richardson was born and later lived with her husband, Alexander J. McCormick, and their eight children. In 1892, "A. J." sold his farm to his brother John, then living on the old family farm (Majoris'). John's only child, Julia Anna, remembers that they moved into their new home three days after Christmas, and that they moved in sleds. The house was large for three persons, so John "Jay" McCormick gradually slipped into the hotel business, first by taking in some of the overflow at campmeeting time. Later, when money and industry came to this valley, "Jay" did well in this sideline. To the memory of Susan Dickerson McCormick and Julia Anna McCormick Wright it should be recorded here that they prepared the extra meals, washed the linen, and cleaned the rooms.

Martha Frye's uncle, Greer Smith retired from his farm during the nineties and built a house (now Abbadini's) across the street from the McElhinny's. Greer Smith was a wool dealer, and he continued in this trade in town. He built a shed behind his house to store the wool he bought from farmers.





The McCormick Family. The brothers Alex J. and John G. are standing on the porch.

In 1896, young Louis Ecburton walked into our town looking for work. He felt very fortunate when Leonidas Bedsworth offered to teach him the blacksmith trade because work was hard to get. He received twelve dollars a month for assisting at the blacksmith shop and helping out on the Bedsworth farm. It seemed to be enough; there wasn't much for him to buy, and it was easy to save. Louis slept in the back of the shop where Mr. Byers did his carpentry work. He was glad he didn't live at Bedsworth's when he learned that the former occupants, the Crouches, had been murdered there.

It was becoming increasingly hard to make a profit from farm crops in this area. Despite droughts the large midwestern farms were flooding the grain markets. Farmers liked cheap money, but in the middle of the 1890's money was scarce. In Fayette County, however, farmers were fortunate to have coal operators buy their coal rights. One such farmer, James B. Piersol, sold his farm and moved to Bentleyville. He lived in the brick house across the alley from McElhinny's before building a home beside Greer Smith (opposite Booth's). J. B. Piersol's



son, Warren, who had married our Belle Jones in Kansas, had been driven back to Somerset township by a ten year Kansas drought. Later Belle often said she would rather be poor in Bentleyville than rich in Kansas. James Piersol bought Winfield Richardson's store for his second son, Jake, who wasn't strong enough to farm. Jake went back to Fayette City to find his wife, a school teacher, Emma Luce.

As a young bachelor, Jake found little to do in the evening; so he often visited the blacksmith, Louis Eckburton. After Louis married, he still hung-out at the Eckburton's and fifty years later, friends still remember that Reppie once said, "Let's go to bed, so Jake can go home."

## Chapter 11

### JAMES ELLSWORTH, TYCOON—ELLSWORTH, THE TOWN— STORIES OF ARTHUR WATKINS AND W. J. WILSON— SOCIAL WORKERS

One night in the winter of 1898 four strangers came to the McCormick Hotel; the foreman, asked for rooms for himself and three helpers for three weeks, three months or three years. Jay McCormick could hardly have taken him seriously, since there was nothing here that would keep four men busy three weeks much less three years. Ed Cristman, nevertheless, was not just boasting; he had come to prepare the way for a new industry which in a short time was to affect every life in the valley. These men were drillers working for a Chicago tycoon who had already quietly optioned 16,000 acres along Pigeon Creek, south of Bentleyville. James W. Ellsworth, contrary to the advice of his friends, had determined to enter the coal business and had chosen a coal field which because of the abundance of gas had been considered impractical to mine. Mr. Ellsworth had a theory he wanted to prove; he thought that if enough entries were driven through the coal body, the mine would drain itself of gas.

These drillers, one was Frank Reese, assisted by John Wright, Julia Anna McCormick's husband, drilled test holes in every acre to study the depth and quality of the coal. Ellsworth sent coal samples to Europe, and the French and Italian railroads were impressed by quality. Ellsworth's ships would carry the coal. He spent the next two years traveling between the two continents, studying German and English mines, preparing markets and supervising the operations of Pigeon Creek.

Here on Pigeon Creek, Ellsworth's agents were buying up the options on farms at thirty dollars an acre. Sites for the shafts had been chosen (Cokeburg and Ellsworth) and workmen were sinking four shafts down to the coal seam. The news of work brought farmers and workmen here from several counties. The company was building homes for the miners and community buildings beside the mine buildings. A brick kiln was built on Peterman's Hill, and all the brick used in the mine buildings, company store, school, hotel, and miner's houses were fired

in it. In Bentleyville, the Crouch and McCormick hotels were full of carpenters, brick layers, and mine officials. Private homes took in the overflow. At this same time the Pennsylvania Railroad was laying a branch line from Monongahela City up the Pigeon Creek valley to the Ellsworth mines. Farmers drove their teams and wagons here from distant farms to get work, grading the railroad bed. In town the landlords, merchants and the blacksmith were reveling in their good fortune. Mr. Ellsworth's investment of one hundred million dollars was certainly a welcome gift in this valley.

The first company-houses were the frame cottages and double houses on Rows A, B, C, and D which were quickly opened for the miners that began to pour into "Ellsworth". In New York City, agents for the company met the boats carrying European immigrants and directed them toward "the model mining town". In the station in Monongahela City you could almost always see a group of them huddled around their bundles waiting for the train's caboose that would carry them to the mine town. In Ellsworth, the company assigned them to homes among people of their own nationality. The company had a policy to keep the immigrants in their own nationality groups such as Russian, Polish, Italian, English, and American Negro. The churches and school directors from surrounding districts, however, quickly moved into the new community to organize groups which cut across the nationality barriers and started the "Americanization" process.

The development of the mine was threatened by a number of disasters. The first that is well remembered was a rain storm that can be fixed as to date, September 1, 1899, because it was remembered as the torrential rain that came the day Colonel Hawkins was buried. The soldier had died while returning from Spanish-American War, in the Philippines, and was given a hero's burial in Washington, Pa. The rain began to fall during the ceremonies, and it kept up until the creeks overflowed. The force of the water this time was so great, twelve of the thirteen covered bridges on Pigeon Creek were washed out. The one standing was in the borough, near the site of the Acme Brewery. The two others in the borough which were washed out were near White's mill and the Weaver farm (old Newkirk Farm). Jay McCormick's horses were found washed down to Weaver's. Besides losing a bridge near the mine, the fresh excavations were full of water, and the big boilers for the air compressors were full of mud.

The winter of 1901 is remembered for its epidemic of small pox in the Ellsworth mining community. Dr. Booth was the doctor for these contagious cases who were isolated in an old farm



house near the company houses. The doctor's isolation technique consisted of changing his clothes in his stable in freezing weather. He then rode the train inside the engine cab to Ellsworth. A male nurse who tended the patients added to the disaster when he got drunk and set fire to the beds. Two of the patients ran out into the snow, and the same two died from the disease. In Bentleyville, Dr. Booth attended the birth of Betty Ecburton during the epidemic, and the neighbors criticized Mrs. Ecburton for her choice of doctors. Reppie countered that she knew that Dr. Booth would be careful not to spread the small pox since he had two children of his own at home.

Mining was really dangerous fifty years ago. One miner remembers that in six months there were sixty-four deaths; although no single accident took more than four lives. These figures are not verified, but others remember a great number of gas explosions. When mining with compressed air proved too expensive, and the mine would not drain itself of gas, as he hoped, Mr. Ellsworth began to search for better methods of ventilation so that he could use electricity. He discovered in England the sirocco fans which seemed to be the answer to the problem of gas. He had to exert his influence in the courts to get permission to use electricity in the mine because some state mine inspectors had not approved of the risk involved.

James Ellsworth used his power in the courts a second time when he wished to have two bar-rooms at the new mines. He was forced into this position when the efficiency of his mines was threatened by absenteeism. His miners had been buying the liquor that came by express from Pittsburgh, and the liquor left them too drunk to work for several days. Mr. Ellsworth reasoned that if the men could buy beer in a tap room, there would be less liquor traffic.

James Ellsworth had an Englishman recruiting miners for his new mine at Southhampton. Mr. Millar, his agent, was the baggage master at this port and in his position could steer emigrants to Ellsworth. This service, however, was illegal since United States law prohibited this foreign solicitation of labor.

One of Mr. Millar's recruits was a young South Welshman, Arthur Watkins, who was sailing to Canada to seek his fortune. Arthur had never been in a mine and never heard of the United States (he had only studied the British Colonies in school), but since the fare was the same and the wages were sixteen shillings a day (about four dollars), he was interested. For advice, Arthur turned to a mining engineer, Jack Hargest, who in turn was so impressed by the high wages he not only advised Arthur to go but went with him.

Arriving at Ellsworth in June of 1903, looking forward to a future of financial security, these two recruits were dismayed to find the "model" town mired in mud and opportunities not what they had been advertised to be. The daily wages were two dollars and fifty-six cents, which were good at the time, but they were not four dollars, and Mr. Hargest who had expected a better job with higher pay had to work as a laborer. Finding decent "room and board" in Ellsworth was a problem. Everyone took in boarders; a four room house could have ten inhabitants, and one house had twenty-six boarders. Each bed had two men by day and two different ones at night. This system worked smoothly all week, but Sunday morning was usually the time for a fight between the day-men who refused to get up and the night-men who wanted to go to bed.

Many of the Britishers like Arthur Watkins had never seen a mine before, but many were given supervisory jobs. There was no classification of workers like there had been in Europe. One, Charlie Warwick, was tipple boss of this mine, the first he had ever seen. On one occasion he said to Mr. Watkins, "Arthur, what's this 'shaft' everyone talks about," and Arthur said, "It's the hole in the ground." Mr. Warwick at first wouldn't believe it.

Mosquitoes and fire flies were new varieties of bugs for the English and Welshmen. Mosquitoes seemed to be terrible pests. One fellow who had been tormented by them kept to his boarding house until a night when he was determined to sit on the porch. Seeing the fire flies, he exclaimed to a friend, "The mosquitoes have brought their lanterns so they can see to bite you at night."

Arthur, Jack Hargest, and Tom Gwynn attended a Fourth of July baseball game soon after their arrival in this country. Not being familiar with either the holiday or the game, they were soon in trouble. Tom voiced his opinion about the dumb Yankees who tried to hit a ball with a round stick. He shouted his advice about using a flat stick. The natives were more incensed when the three followed the British custom of applauding for the good plays made by both the Bentleyville and Ellsworth teams. The "last straw" came at the end of the game when the band struck up "America". Tom jumped to his feet and exclaimed in surprise, "They're playing 'God Save the King'!" A spectator beside him promptly punched him in the nose.

The British miners who had left classified positions to come to this country were dissatisfied with their lot. A complaint to immigration authorities brought government investigators to Ellsworth to question the miners and send back home those who had been illegally solicited. Mr. Millar, now the mine superintendent, was fined \$10,000.

Arthur Watkins left our community after this final incident. He was boarding at the Central (Crouch) Hotel, and his bed-mate was the mine foreman, Harry Phythian. This particular evening Arthur knew he was to help the foreman put out a mine fire the next day, but he was not prepared for his landlord's announcement that Mr. Phythian had made his will, and he, the landlord, would be willing, also, to help Arthur with his possessions. That evening, Arthur informed his bed fellow that he was willing to share the experience of fire-fighting with others. Harry then tried to reason with him; he said this crew had been selected from the men who would not be missed if anything happened; Arthur would give the company less trouble since he was not a citizen, not married, and had no dependents. That all sounded sensible to Arthur; nevertheless, that night he couldn't sleep. Harry's answer to his concern was, "Heaven will be your home." The next morning Arthur Watkins excused himself from the job and left the mining industry permanently.

Another young man drawn to Ellsworth was William J. Wilson from Belfast, Ireland. Formerly he had served with the British Royal Horse Artillery in India, but in 1904 he was visiting relatives in Pittsburgh where a cousin, David Bell, persuaded him to come to Ellsworth. David Bell was the manager of the Ellsworth company store, and his cousin was to be his assistant for three months at \$50 a month. This three months visit has now spread out into fifty years. As a store clerk in Ellsworth, Mr. Wilson had to use his ingenuity in order to serve his Russian, Polish, Italian, and Slavish customers. "W. J." wore a coat with many pockets which were filled with coffee, sugar, beans, apples, flour, and the common staples. When new immigrants came to the store, he would show them a handful of flour, and if they said "Ya" he would say "flour". Then he held up his fingers until he found the right number of pounds. His customers soon learned the correct terms by this method of tutoring. The miners ate well, the best meat was two pounds for a quarter, butter was fifteen cents a pound, and eggs were ten cents a dozen.

Mr. Ellsworth had a reputation for saving string and for being inflexible. He once caught Mr. Wilson cutting the string that came around dress goods and warned him, "Never expect to get very far if you cut string." Another time when Mr. Wilson was unpacking crockery, Mr. Ellsworth ordered W. J. to discard a cracked one. Although he knew the crack was only a piece of straw, Mr. Wilson discarded the bowl. Mr. Ellsworth could never be contradicted and always insisted on his own way.



David Bell and W. J. Wilson built a store at Mancha siding in 1906 and supplied food to the laborers working on the Marianna railroad extension. In 1908, Mr. Wilson vowed that he would go into business on his own if Teddy Roosevelt was elected. It took several days to count the returns, but Roosevelt was elected, and W. J. came to Bentleyville and bought several lots on the north end of Main Street. He was digging the foundation of his store and apartment when a worker on the railroad brought the news of the Marianna disaster. A third of the 154 casualties had been his customers. Most of his trade was among the miners living in Cokeburg and near the Braznell mine (Acme). Mr. Wilson would take the early train to Cokeburg to take orders, and in the afternoon a delivery wagon drawn by two horses delivered the groceries.

Every Wednesday, Mr. Wilson, William Greenlee, John Snyder, and William Crawford went to Pittsburgh to buy supplies for their respective stores. In a comradely fashion they took an early train together, bought their produce and groceries and put these in a freight car. Next morning this freight car was waiting on the Bentleyville siding. If any of the four store owners ran out of an item between trips, he borrowed from one of his competitors. Together with the baker, Mr. Stevenson, they bought flour by the freight car. In Pittsburgh, Mr. Wilson also performed little errands for his customers. The wives of foreign miners asked him to buy baby clothes and other special articles. He was the confidant of many of his customers who were struggling to adjust to our environment. He wrote their mail orders and letters and was usually the first to share the secret of an expected baby.

Mr. Ellsworth sold his coal mines in 1907 to the Lackawanna Steel Corp. after mining a million and a half tons of coal. There is one act of the new company which should be recorded and that concerns the new policy toward the families of the miners. The conditions in the mining community were so unpleasant in 1910 the company employed a "sociological superintendent", Mr. E. E. Bach, and a lady social worker to raise the living standard. Miss Ethel Cabalk was very effective in her work since she could speak most of the languages used here. Her work was chiefly with the women; she taught them hand-work, helped them nurse their sick, explained the school program and in every way tried to "Americanize" them. Mr. Bach developed programs which encouraged higher living standards, such as contests for the best garden, best kept yard and best kept house. Each Saturday night there was a dance on a specially constructed

platform between two rows of houses. Every other dance was a folk dance from a country represented, often performed in costume. The company also sponsored Boy Scout groups and Camp-Fire Girls besides an extensive safety program for the miners. The schools were undoubtedly the greatest welding factor; and thus in less time than it would have seemed possible, large bodies of foreign peoples were being assimilated into the American scene.

## Chapter 12

### BENTLEYVILLE, BOOM TOWN—NEW SOCIAL ORDER— BRAZNELL—NEW CHURCHES—BOROUGH IMPROVEMENTS—HIGH SCHOOL— HOLIDAYS—AUTOMOBILES— TELEPHONES AND FIRES— CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

"Bentleyville" it was called in 1900; and the dropping of a letter was the least important of the changes that took place. After nearly a century of gradual progress, in only a decade the country village became an industrial town. In ten years the population of the borough more than tripled. The expanding town consequently suffered growing pains and had all the color of the notorious gold-rush towns. Like the Western towns, Bentleyville had a real estate boom, money to be spent, transient merchants, wild drinking, robberies, mine disasters, indignant townspeople, crusading churches, transplanted culture and romance. An historical novelist could find enough material there for a book. This history that you are reading, however, is confined to the recording of impressions, letters, documents from the past which might not survive our eldest citizens. It is possible that this survey might in the future interest such an author and inspire him to delve deeper into our contemporary history. For his sake and because the memory of those years, the early 1900's, is becoming indistinct, I have written down the fragments that I have uncovered. This author then will not be as ignorant of the manners and customs as I once was.

The European immigrants thronging into this valley could not have known what to expect; they were only expecting something better than what they had left at home. A little English girl, Eva Smith, was expecting Indians; but she forgot them when she saw a little colored boy playing near the train. The dark-skinned boy was such a curiosity to her family, they gathered around to observe him.

The immediate problem for most of the new families was finding a place to live. They generally moved in with friends and relatives or rented a few rooms in an already crowded house. Many men like Eva's father came alone to look over



the situation before sending for their families. These men had to be satisfied with very little for themselves, but by working hard at the mines they could save enough money to send for their families and to put payment on one of the houses that were popping up like mushrooms. Contractors were reaping benefits from the box-like houses they were building.

The farmers in town who had kept their cows and horses in the pastures behind their homes found themselves in a position to make some easy money. They envisioned a town with more than one street and they prepared the way by staking-out plans of lots in their pastures. Some of the lots were auctioned-off but most were sold as the demand arose. One such sale made an indelible impression in the memory of five-year-old John Wright. His grandfather, J. G. McCormick sold sections of the farm to a realtor, Roy Wycoff, who laid out a plan of lots. This man was able to draw a large crowd for his action with a spectacle—a balloon ascension. A hot air balloon was launched on the hill behind our present elementary school; and to further entertain the crowd, the rider performed on a trapeze below the basket. The balloon had been inflated with hot air produced by burning straw. It did not rise very high nor travel more than a mile, but it was a thrilling sight for small boys. The adults were satisfied by the free sandwiches and lemonade.

The people who owned land in the borough must have felt pretty smug or else frustrated. They would be glad that they had hung on to their farms and old homesteads but then there was the problem of deciding how long to wait for a better offer. The mining companies were buying land at \$500 an acre instead of the \$30 that they paid in 1898. If Winfield Richardson had waited ten years, he would have gotten \$2500 for his store instead of the \$400 that Jake Piersol paid him. In 1904, Lavinia Jones bought a lot and house in town for \$850 that had cost only \$445 five years before. Joseph Underwood paid Mr. Burkhart \$3500 for a lot for the Farmers and Miners Bank in 1906. The businessmen and farmers in this valley who few years before were resigned to eking out a frugal living were now realtors, bank directors, and stockholders. These "capitalists" were also building homes that were showpieces in the community, for example—the J. Elliott Richardson house, yellow brick with a tower and Dr. Booth's large frame house with office space. Dr. French moved from Ellsworth into a brick home beside Booth's shortly before his untimely death. Hudson Crouch, J. G. McCormick, J. W. Piersol, Warren Piersol, Hiram Hetherington, William Johnson and J. H. Scott were some others who could build large comfortable homes.

The social life of the community also changed with the times. "Thalia" had died long ago; these business men no longer had time for literary pursuits. The Odd Fellows had been the only organization of its kind here for forty years, but now it was challenged by the Elks, the Moose, the Eagles, and the Knights of Malta. For the women, Mrs. Hiram Hetherington organized a chapter of the Daughters of American Pioneers. There were fancy work clubs and bridge clubs and even Sunday school classes formed club groups. The 1909 campmeeting was rumored to be the last in Bentleyville because the street railway capitalists had offered \$30,000 for the site in hope of building a picnic park. The trustees were able to resist this offer, however.



Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Church Visiting  
H. J. Heinz Plant in Pittsburgh in 1911

Front row, left to right: Mrs. John Allison, (minister's wife), Mrs. Lucile Richardson, Mrs. Mabel Bedsworth, Mrs. Eleanor McCormick, Mrs. Joshua Hands, Mrs. Ruth Richardson, Mrs. Clyde Hinebaugh. Back row: Mrs. Jewel Snyder, Mrs. Kate Myers, Mrs. Leona Crumrine, Mrs. Alice Croft, Mrs. William Hartman, Mrs. Florence Jones in front of Mrs. Elsie Greenlee, Mrs. Winnett Hartmann, and Mrs. Gertrude Crouch.



Friends Photographed on W. F. Richardson's Lawn,  
about 1908

Seated: Mrs. Elsie Greenlee, Mildred Greenlee, Mrs. Gertrude Crouch, Mrs. Lillian Richardson, Margaret Greenlee, Harry Richardson,  
Standing: Miss Mary (Nannie) West, Hudson Crouch, W. F. Richardson, William Greenlee, Professor A. J. Buffington, beside fountain.

The new social order also threatened the "dry" status of the borough. Since Mr. Bentley bought the Mitchell tavern and poured the whiskey in the gutter, there had not been a liquor license in the town; and for a while yet the petitioners for a license were thwarted. One such action in 1904, was described by Rev. J. C. Francis in the Cumberland Presbyterian magazine Fieldview. He said,

"As soon as it got to the ears of the clergymen that a petition was being circulated for a license to sell liquor in the borough of Bentleyville, they at once gave the alarm. And from house to house they went and from the pulpit they gave 'no uncertain sound'. The people rose up and came to the rescue, and the excitement rose higher and higher until it culminated in a mass meeting of the citizens; and when it was announced that a remonstrance was ready for signers, the people crowded around the table, anxious to sign that which said that Bentleyville shall not have an open hell hole to damn the bodies and souls of our boys and girls. The remonstrance now has about 100 names, and will go to the court with more than that number, I am sure."



The churches were able to keep saloons out of the borough but not the brewery. The Acme Brewery was a large brick building between the center of town and the Acme Mines. The company could brew their beverage in the temperate community as long as they delivered the bottles and kegs to private homes. A common sight on the road through town was a wagon full of beer kegs drawn by powerful Clydesdale horses. A common sound on Sunday evening was this song that John Snyder liked to sing at church meetings.

"Oh the brewer's big horses a 'comin' down the road,  
Totin' all around old Lucifer's load,  
Oh they step so high and they step so free,  
But the brewer's big horses can't run over me.  
Oh no boy, Oh no! the turnpike's free where ever I go,  
I'm a temperance engine can't you see?  
And the brewer's big horses can't run over me."

Our borough could hardly expect to preserve its old social order when it was a magnet drawing people of every nationality and social class—English, Irish, Scotch, Germans, Czechs, Russians, Syrians, Jews, Swiss, Poles, Slavs, Italians, American Negroes, laborers, miners, merchants, artisans and professional men. The town drew social outcasts as well as a pianist, Mrs. Leo Wexler, who had studied under Paderewski. The mines crept even closer in 1906 when a mine shaft was sunk within the borough, near the Newkirk Church. Called "Braznell" after the



Coke Ovens at Acme Mine, Near Bentleyville

owner of the company, it was the center of more construction, increased immigration and new problems for the borough officials.

Problems arose in the mining camp where there were many unattached foreign men living in boarding houses. On pay days and holidays, drinking parties would, as often as not, develop into drunken brawls where men might attack each other with knives, hatchets or guns. The borough officers were sorely tried when they were called out to rule on such assault charges. Usually the principals were unable to speak English, and it was nearly impossible to mete out justice. Dr. Booth was the Braznell company doctor and his job was to sew up the victims and put them on the train for Monongahela.

At the height of its service, the Pennsylvania Railroad ran four passenger trains a day between Monongahela and Marianna. It was the best form of transportation until the streetcar came in 1914 to connect Ellsworth and Bentleyville to Charleroi and the automobile came into common use. The baggage car served as an ambulance for all hospital cases; it was the best way to get there even if you had to wait for the next train. The baggage master was accustomed to carrying the victims of mine accidents, knifed brawlers and the usual sick people. The last train at night is the best remembered, due to its notoriety. The "bummer" would reach our station near midnight, which was a late hour for decent people, but on Saturday night no one would take the "bummer" if they could help it. On this night, the last train up the valley collected all the men who had been drinking in Monongahela's saloons and distributed them to their respective stations.

The Braznell mine was bought by the Pittsburgh-Westmoreland Coal Company in 1908 and this company enlarged the plant by digging a slope and building three hundred bee-hive ovens. The new superintendent, a Scotchman, Donald Darroch, was brought here to increase production. In a year Bentleyville coke was being shipped to the mills from the Acme Mines, as the plant was now called. A report of its production in 1916 by C. C. Sharpnack, Superintendent of the Mines, and J. E. Hackett, Superintendent of Ovens told of eight hundred men working to ship fifteen hundred tons of coke daily.

When the old-timers are asked to describe a wedding or social event, nine out of ten will say, "Did anyone ever tell you about the time Bazzenia Jones and Donald Darroch were serenaded by the Acme mules?" So that you will know what actually happened, the newspaper report is given below. Bazzenia was a granddaughter of Sheshbazzar Bentley and the last daughter of Lavinia and R. L. Jones to marry.



The Darrochs, Bazzenia,  
Donald, Jr., and Donald Sr.

November 1, 1909.

"Monday night was one of the greatest Bentleyville has witnessed in a long time. The occasion was a double affair as Hallowe'en was celebrated in elaborate style, and Donald Darroch and bride were given the 'most monstrous' serenade ever given in this town.

"By evening crowds of people begun to come in from the surrounding communities and the streets were soon alive with swarms of citizens. Masquerading was a prominent feature of the early evening, and was very amusing to all. Costumes

in grotesque styles that would rival the imagination of Ichabod Crane were in evidence as the crowds passed up and down Main street, while the sidewalks and even parts of the street were utilized by the onlookers. Mirth, fun and amusement were all mingled in a happy mass.

"About 9:00 o'clock the signal was given, the band began to play and all was excitement for the big feature of the evening was now about to begin. After parading Main street to gather up all the masqueraders and people who would help, the procession started up Main street and soon arrived at the Jones' home, where the great serenade began. The couple was not long in making their appearance and were hastily ushered into the carriage especially prepared for them.

"This carriage was a cage made of wire, well lighted and decorated, and within were chairs for four. The vehicle was drawn by two mules, surrounded by about 20 other mounts on horses and mules. It developed that extra chairs were placed there to be occupied by Mr. and Mrs. James Cranston, who had returned on Saturday from a wedding trip. Mr. Cranston being present was hastily ushered into the vehicle, and thence to the J. E. Richardson home, where his bride was secured to fill the fourth chair.

"Such a serenade and parade as this is seldom seen, and the celebration lasted until the procession had visited all parts of town. The band led the way and furnished music long after the procession had broken up." . . .



Before Mr. Darroch married into the town's first family, he had an unpleasant scene with a future nephew. It occurred in the Acme blacksmith shop during the lunch hour when the shop was deserted. The superintendent looked into the building and found a boy hammering on the anvil a piece of metal that he had heated in the forge. Mr. Darroch quickly "booted" the boy out, an act he has lived to regret. If he had realized that Robert Piersol was showing early signs of scientific genius, he would have encouraged the boy. Robert, nevertheless, continued to experiment and has gained international attention as a research physicist and a place in Who's Who.

Of all the innovations that this town witnessed in the first decade of the twentieth century, the one that pleased the younger generation most surely was Johnny Snyder's confectionery store. It was right next to the schoolhouse and at noontime anyone lucky enough to have a nickel bought an ice cream cone, and pennies would buy candy. The ice cream parlor was a room behind the store; it was furnished with six wooden tables with chairs. The tables were covered with white oil-cloth. When father treated the family, you could sit at the tables and order sundaes or sodas. Mr. Snyder had a soda fountain of sorts. He mixed his own carbonated water in a barrel that rocked on a cradle. Gas from a tank was forced into the barrel of water, then the barrel was rocked back and forth to make the mixture, called soda water. The ice cream was hauled from Monongahela and later from Charleroi in wagons. The five gallon cans were individually packed in barrels of ice which the local iceman replenished. Patrons could choose from three flavors, vanilla, chocolate, or strawberry and the crisp homemade cones made an ice cream cone a child's delight. The task of making the cones fell to Russell; he was the only one fast enough to form the cones from the thin cake before it cooled. A special waffle iron baked the cone batter and at the right time Russell wrapped the hot cake around a wooden form. These cones were crisp and tasty. All of Mr. Snyder's boys helped in the store; Blanche and Mrs. Snyder had the unwelcomed job of washing the glass ice cream dishes. Ice cream to take home was twenty-five cents a pint, and it was packed in paper cartons that had string handles. Mr. Snyder was strict about not selling ice cream on Sunday; however, if you ordered it on Saturday, he would keep it for you until Sunday in his ice.

A Catholic priest was assigned to this coal mining area in 1903 to take care of the great number of Catholic miners. Church records show that Father John Woshner's first sacrament was the marriage of Elizabeth Radaitis and Anthony

Jakaitis on April 28, 1903. Anna Klimaszewski was baptised on May 6 and the first recorded death was that of Joseph Alexkonis on September 21, 1903. A new priest, Father Abramaitis came the next year, and he supervised the building of the first St. Luke Church. The frame structure costing \$4500 was built on land donated by Mr. Ellsworth and this same plot is now the site of St. Clement's Church. This first church was destroyed by wind and the second burned down before it was completed. The second church was on a new site, and it was there that the third and present structure was erected—a large brick church costing \$12,000. The new St. Luke's was dedicated on February 15, 1909 by Bishop Canevin of the Pittsburgh Diocese. An indication of the times is seen in the church's burial records, the first ten being for children under two years old. The first burial in St. Luke Cemetery was for Joseph Cholewa who died July 11, 1905. This church served Catholics of all nationalities for a time but in 1913 the Slovak parishioners asked for a Slovak church and priest. The Bishop gave them the original plot in Ellsworth and named the church after St. Cyril and St. Method, the apostles to the Slavs. The name, obviously, was not finally accepted since the church is now named for St. Clement.

For two years a weekly paper, The Bentleyville Times, was an instrument for spreading local news. If these years, 1908 and 1909 are fair examples of the boom years, you can easily picture the life here by reading from its files. The local editor, Emory Snyder, reported all the news and covered social events in detail and continually encouraged civic progress. One such society note reported a forthcoming "Spinsters' Convention".

"On the night of November 20 (1909), in the Farmers and Miners Bank hall, the ladies of the Young Women's Home Missionary Society of the Presbyterian church will produce the comic play, the 'Spinsters' Convention'. The play is an extremely laughable one, and many celebrities are reproduced to furnish entertainment for the audience. The innermost thought and characteristic habits of the spinster are portrayed to their purest perfection. The lives and morals of eligible bachelors and widowers of Bentleyville are dissected openly and fearlessly. Although a most entertaining evening is to be expected, and knowing the ability as we do of these ladies in this line, no person can afford to miss it. We advise each and every person in the community, from now and henceforward, to guard his words and actions lest his be the antics to most amuse the large crowd that is expected on that evening."

The Times took an active part in a campaign that was directed at the Pennsylvania Railroad concerning the local station. A shed beside the Farmer's and Miners Bank Building was only an excuse for a station that served a growing town and four daily passenger trains. Another Times campaign was directed toward the muddy road. A local correspondent who called himself "Yon Yonson" wrote the following letter to the paper. Yon Yonson voiced decided opinions on many topics and readers were naturally curious about his identity, but the editor was under oath not to give "Yon" away. If anyone is still curious, he was William Young.

"Yon Yonson Don't Like Our Streets

Editor Bentleyville Times:

De bublick was much surprise at vat some of dem big guns says about our streeds in dis borough. Ven de peoples of se boroug says de streeds was bad und it was not fit to drive vone's mules over, it must be pretty bad. Vell, dot is vot de peoples dink. But some odder peoples comes down here from Vashington or some blace else und dey look over vone of dem dings, vell I don't no vat dey call dem, but id is vone dem dings vot has tree legs und vone face mit N.E.S.W. N.W. & S.E., dots vot vas on de face. Vell dot man tries to tell dem peoples vat vas halling lumber, beer and coles over dem road dot dey vas not bad.

Dot's all right, but dem peoples vat say dem streeds vas all right comes here on von train and he knows nodding about de streeds.

Vould you shust dell dose peoples how dot man tells how deep de mud is on von streed by looking at dot masheen mid N.W.S.W.N.E.S.E. on it.

Dot's vot puzzles de peoples.

Dem gentlemens stays on de side valk and dells de peoples dot de streeds vas goot.

Vell, if dem mens vas from Vashington de citizens of Bentleyville would be glad for Shudge Jacelvain or Taylor to serve von inshunction on dem, prohibiting dem from coming to Bentleyville.

Yon Yonson"

An example of the paper's devotion to details is this news item entitled "A Plot That Failed".

"A serious accident came near resulting on Sunday evening when Max Goldman, Mr. Sidle's clerk, was thrown from a buggy near the McCormick hotel. He and the barber,





Main Street, Bentleyville, 1916



Men making a sidewalk around the house that had been the home of J. Alexander Newkirk, James B. Piersol, and William Greenlee. This site is now occupied by the A & P Store.

A. Decotiis had been out driving, and seeing a lady friend, invited her to take a ride with them. Max was sitting on Al's knee, doing the driving, when Decotiis in some way either purposely or carelessly allowed Max to fall out and witnesses declare assisted him in making a flying leap or fall into a nearby yard. It is hinted that the barber wanted to take a drive minus the clerk, and expected to escape with the rig, but Max held to the lines, so that if there was a plot it failed. However, the horse became excited and a runaway was narrowly averted. Both fellows deny the charge but the witnesses claim it was a plain attempt at making away with the rig."

There were numerous articles about runaway horses and upset buggies; enough to make you think our automobiles are not so dangerous. An item captioned "A Nervy School Teacher" related a story about Miss Ruth Hetherington and her encounter with a runaway horse. The horse was tearing along dragging two buggy wheels and Miss Hetherington fearlessly grabbed its bridle, subdued it and sent it to the Richardson livery stable to await an owner. Twelve-year-old Ross Richardson was driving his mother and a two-week-old baby down a steep grade on First Avenue when the horse began to kick and then run. When the frightened animal turned the corner the buggy was upset and the three occupants were hurled upon a pile of stone. Mrs. W. W. Richardson protected the baby from injury and escaped with a sprained ankle. Witnesses of the accident were surprised that they escaped fatal injury.

"Three years ago two teachers were sufficient to meet the schools' demands at Bentleyville, but today there are five. Careful investigation makes it evident that the next year will require seven to accommodate the demands so rapidly is the rejuvenated town growing.

Last fall September 7, 1908, the people established a high school for a trial. The school was advertised and an invitation given to nearby districts to attend. Fallowfield, Somerset, and West Bethlehem townships and Ellsworth and Cokeburg borough all responded.

Prof. C. P. McCormick, who has had much experience as a school organizer was chosen principal. He followed out the law by adopting the State High School course. This being the first year, only one teacher was necessary.

The work so far has been rigid and thorough, and it is evident the year will close with a strong class promoted to the second year grade. Besides the regular classwork the

school has semi-monthly drills in parliamentary law. They have organized a literary society, which renders a splendid program semi-monthly."

This experimental class met in the Odd Fellows hall, in the room behind O. M. Frye's store. All of the subjects were taught by Prof. McCormick the first year when all of the students were freshmen; Harry Richardson, Winfield's son, became his assistant when the second class started. One of his students remembers that the professor took the "high school" on numerous field trips or hikes that occasionally would wander as far as the Calhoun farm (near Van Voorhis, now Joseph Razum's farm) and Mrs. Calhoun would prepare a lunch for the hungry "bird watchers". The class found this method of studying rocks, birds, and plants enjoyable as well as educational. Zeda King, Verna Buckingham, Marie Cullen, Donna Wherry, Mable Swagler, Elizabeth White, Mary Piersol, Adlai McCormick, Martha Brown, Hazel Scott, Kathlyn Cullen, Sevilla Booth, Myrtle Schlehr, John Hedge, and Max Wherry composed this class. Unfortunately, before the junior class was formed, Marie Cullen, Mable Swagler and Martha Brown had died, and only seven eventually finished the three year course.

The formation of the high school meant a housing problem that was not easy to solve. Work had begun on a building across the creek on the slope above Ecburton's, but it was discontinued after a group of citizens, including "Yon Yonson" opposed the plan. They were opposed to making the students cross the creek, one reason being that there was only a foot bridge. The temporary solution was to add more rooms to the old building.

From "The Times":

"County Supt. L. R. Crumrine visited our schools on last Friday and reports that the schools are doing very good work considering the crowded conditions that prevail in the school.

The new addition to the building is being rapidly rushed to completion and it is hoped that by next week the building will be so far completed that the schools can be moved into it. When the new rooms are ready to be occupied there will be adequate room for all. There are a large number of pupils not in school that should be as is evidenced by the large number of children of school age that are daily to be seen on our streets. At Braznell even more children are out of school if people who are in a good position to know are to be believed. The school which is being conducted in the Bank Hall for Braznell school children is far from ideal, and the distance to travel is too far, but the new building at that place





Emory Snyder's Class in 1910

First row, left to right: Merrit King, John Harris, Lois Lindley, Zella Lindley, Paul Piersol, Elmer Harrington, Hugh Shipe.

Second row: Sam McGill, John Booth, Clay Bedsworth, Hilda Shipe, Louise Hetherington, Helen Frye, Lillian Springer, Janet Huffman.

Third row: Ralph Byers, Della Croft, Fay Finney, Marie Lang, Anna Bigler, Margerie Wise, Emory Snyder, Teacher.

Fourth row: Ray Bigler, Earl Grubb, Noah Jones, Charles Jones, Raymond Gibson, Russell Snyder.

is progressing nicely and will soon be ready for occupancy and then it is hoped that every child of school age will be forced to attend one or the other of the schools of the boro."

The school had no organized athletic team, but the town had a baseball team that it supported with great enthusiasm. Baseball, in fact, was the town's chief entertainment in the summer.

On the Fourth of July there were sometimes three games. The first was a farce between teams of older men—the “Fats” and the “Leans”. Then there would be a double header with another town, like Monongahela or Ellsworth.

The Fourth of July was “the” holiday. The day would be full of noise, there being no restriction against hardly any type of fire works or explosive. There was relatively little excitement at Christmas or Easter. Many stores remained open on those days, and there were no special church services. Christmas gifts were generally confined to treats for children—oranges and candy.

The rapid increase in population and the corresponding increase in Baptists made it conceivable to organize a Baptist church. The Pigeon Creek Baptist Church sponsored the new group and supplied their own minister for the services that were held for two years in the school house on Main Street. In the spring of 1908 a church building was commenced on Third Street on lots donated by Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Huffman and Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Bigler. Erected at a cost of \$3500, it was dedicated on November 22. Elma Huffman, Janet Huffman, Anna Bigler, and Ray Bigler were the first members to be baptised in the new building. The charter members of the First Baptist Church of Bentleyville were Deacon and Mrs. S. W. Huffman, Deacon and Mrs. Garber, Janet Huffman, Kate Huffman, Maud Decker, Eva Decker, Ethel Decker, Guy Grubb, Clarence Fine, Ray Bigler, Anna Bigler, Levinia Green, Ethel Davis, Marion Davis, Anna Jones, Albert Garber, Olive Garber, Mrs. Nannie Crawford, Mrs. Jane Cox, Miller Harris, and Victorine Harris.

“Jay” McCormick was the first to trade his buggy for a horseless carriage. It was a 1909 McIntyre; the hood resembled the back end of a Ford Model T; the cloth top was like a buggy; and the wooden wheels had spokes and solid rubber tires. The power for the chain drive was supplied by a two cylinder, air-cooled engine with a planetary transmission. The salesman lived at McCormick’s several days while he taught John Wright, Jay McCormick’s son-in-law, to drive and service the motor car. Jay never learned to drive, but supplied John a series of cars, including three Wintons, to chauffeur. The usual excursion was a short jaunt into the country; the McIntyre’s longest trip was to the Centerville cemetery. Dr. Booth bought a Buick in 1910 and friends lined-up for a ride. When the car chugged down the road at twenty miles an hour, everyone looked out the window. When there were only several cars in the neighborhood, the owners bought gasoline in barrels and strained it

through chamois skin. The first "service station" was Bill Johnson's drug store; he sold Waverly gasoline.

The danger in driving an automobile is illustrated by a newspaper clipping dated October 9, 1910. It reads, "while driving between Bentleyville and Beallsville, Dr. Booth broke his arm when cranking his car. The two lady passengers were unable to start the car, so the doctor sat on the roadside nursing his arm until Dr. H. J. Kirby drove by and rescued him."

Dr. Booth was kept quite busy by numerous activities. He was one of the alert citizens who realized that a bank was needed in this boom town, and he and his father-in-law were officers in the Bentleyville National Bank which was chartered in 1906. The men on the board of directors were J. D. Duvall, J. P. Duvall, W. H. Marshall, J. W. Frost, J. W. Piersol, and S. S. Scott. The bank officers were C. K. Frye, president; Dr. A. N. Booth, first vice president; Capt. J. C. French, second vice president; W. R. Stevens, cashier and B. J. Duvall, assistant cashier. The bank building was on the corner beside Booth's. (The McElhinny house had burned down.) This same year another group was organizing a bank to be called the Farmer's and Miners' Bank. Joseph A. Herron of Monongahela City was the first president and T. A. Hetherington was vice president. The directors were J. A. Herron, T. A. Hetherington, Joseph Underwood, W. F. Richardson, Julian Grable, W. H. Wilson, A. B. Richardson, and J. G. McCormick. Demas Lindley was the first cashier. The directors bought the lot at the foot of the Washington Road and built a three story brick building. Facilities for a store, meeting hall, and living quarters were incorporated into the "skyscraper" which was opened for business in 1908.

This borough received the benefits of Mr. Bell's invention in the early 1900's in the form of a single party line extension from Charleroi. This line, called the Lover line was connected with the Bell system. To call locally, you cranked out the other phone's code. If you were lucky, you would find the line free and within an hour call Pittsburgh. When calling long distance, if a switchboard operator was not familiar with a small town you would never get your party. There was no information operator to help route the calls.

A second telephone company strung up lines in town in 1911. An independent telephone company, the Airline Telephone Co., that had lines from Charleroi, to California and through Coal Center went bankrupt, and was bought by citizens of Bentleyville and Ellsworth for one thousand dollars. The shareholders W. F. Richardson, A. N. Booth, J. M. Paden, J. H. Frederick, I. B.



Richardson, E. E. French, C. K. Frye, J. W. Piersol, John Burkhart, T. S. Iams, P. B. Dever, William Greenlee, O. T. Tinley, J. M. Nichols, F. P. Watson, Leo Wexler, U. G. Ames, and T. A. Hetherington, bought five thousand dollars of capital stock and incorporated The Bentleyville Telephone Co. on June 9, 1911. Lines were put up in town and a male operator was installed at the switchboard. He had a deep harsh voice and if you rang central when he was in his cups, he'd say, "What the hell do you want?", you told him and he'd say, "You hold on; I'll try to get 'em for you." The company charged eighty-seven cents a month if you bought your phone, otherwise it was a dollar fifty. The phones were the large wall type that doubled as coat racks. Even the public phone at Caldwell's Drug Store was on a party line. A customer generally had an experience similar to the stranger in the store who wanted to call Pittsburgh. He found two local housewives on the line discussing what they would feed their husbands at dinner. The stranger listened for a while, relating to the people in the store bits of the conversation. When tiring of this sport, he got a clear line by telling the ladies he wanted to report a fire.

The alarm for a real fire was the tolling school bell. A fire would bring out the fire chief, Harry McClain, and a bucket and ladder company. The equipment consisted of fifty ten-quart galvanized buckets, two double ladders and a single ladder. To get water to the fire, a human chain would form between a well and the burning building, and buckets of water would be passed from hand to hand. Few fires could be put out, but nearby buildings could be protected and furniture could be saved. In 1911, the building between Booth's and the First National Bank burned and only hard work saved the doctor's new home. The side of the home facing the fire, was covered with wet carpets and Mrs. Booth's best quilts. Willing hands carried all the furniture out onto the yard, even the dishes. Mrs. Booth had to restrain a man helpfully unscrewing the radiators. The burning building had housed a nickelodian upstairs and Brown's store and a restaurant downstairs. The bucket brigade could not save it. There was no lack of assistance to carry out the furniture at Booths, but the following day when the time came to put it back, only Mr. Galloway showed up. It was not uncommon in this town of many stores for a merchant to get his fire insurance money when he contemplated moving his business. In one issue, The Times reported a butcher closing his shop under a court order and in another column there was a news item about a mysterious fire in the butcher's cellar. The big fire of 1920 that burned down the school and several stores prompted the organization of the volunteer company.

The Bentleyville Times reports the work done by the Board of Health, another new organization.

**"Health Board Makes Its Report"**

The Board of Health of Bentleyville has submitted a report covering its first year's work, which will no doubt prove interesting to the people of this boro. The Health board was organized October, 1908, and has now completed one year's work. When it is considered that they had no knowledge of the work it must be considered they had done well during the past year in putting into working order this new organization. The board is now thoroughly organized and ready to do efficient work. The rules and regulations governing its workings were drawn up and published early in the year. The board works quietly, but from the following statement it will be seen that they done considerable work. The expenses for the year were \$137.45. Next year's expenses should be much less, as there will be no ordinances to print, or equipment to buy, and there is now on hand quite a large quantity of disinfectants and printing which can be utilized.

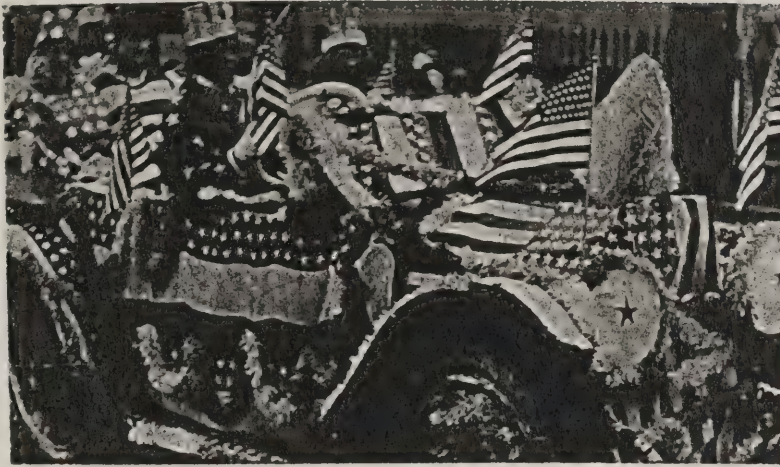
The board states that in all cases where notices were given to abate nuisances it was promptly done, except one notice which was given to abate a nuisance in an alley and back yard. The report for the year is as follows:--

Communicable diseases reported, 41, as follows--  
Measles, 19; scarlet fever, 13; pneumonia, 7; erysipelas, 1; whooping cough, 1. Houses placarded, 26; disinfected, 18; quarantine absolute, 2; houses quarantined modified, 15; houses guarded, 1.

Nuisances reported and notices given to abate them, unburied horse 1; sewers discharging on Main street, 1; unsanitary back yards and alleys, 3; buildings in unsanitary condition, 2; unsanitary butcher shops, 2; unsanitary pig pens, 3; unsanitary privies, 12.

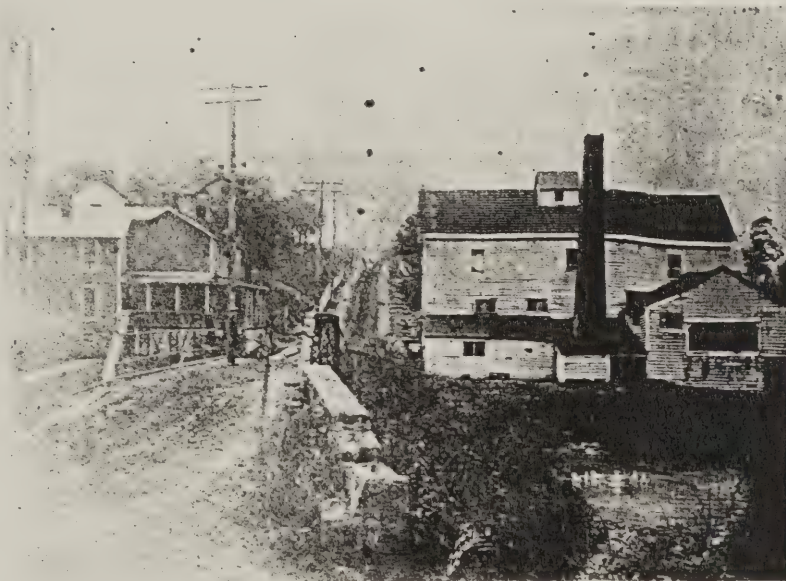
Expenses of the boards, including disinfecting paraphernalia, drugs, material on hand, printing of ordinances, placards and report cards, salary of health officer and secretary, \$137.45."

The last event which I would bring to your attention is the celebration of Bentleyville's one hundredth anniversary in 1916. The festivities that were planned for the entertainment of present and former residents occupied five days of the first week of July. There were several religious services on Sunday; Rev. F.



Auto in Fourth of July Parade, 1916

The driver is George Haberlin; the girls are Lucille Richardson, Dorothy Sands, and Ethel Richardson.



The old mill in 1910 after a century of service.



Silveus, the organizer of the Presbyterian Church, came back to preach at the evening service. Monday was taken up by a ball game, a public reception at the Farmers and Miners Bank Hall and a band concert. Tuesday was the Fourth and there was the usual parade and ball game in the morning, speeches and another ball game in the afternoon, and then fire works after dark. Wednesday and Thursday saw more parades, ball games and band concerts. There are many people who have saved the Historical Program that was distributed that week. I have copied from the booklet the names of business establishments and merchants who used its advertising space. Walter Mitchell counted sixty-five stores in the borough so you know there were many small stores which did not advertise, many of these were crowded together on the street running into Ellsworth.

W. H. Marshall - Contractor and Builder  
 J. A. Gilmore - Hardware Plumbing and Gasoline  
 Boyer Bros. Co. - Cash Groceries, Grain & Feed  
 Joseph Kossis - Dry Goods Ladies & Men's Furnishings  
 J. A. Newlon - 5 and 10¢ Goods  
 George Abraham and Bros. - Mens Furnishings  
 I. B. Richardson - Livery  
 O.K. Baking Co.  
 Greenfields - Furniture  
 Sidle's Big Store - The Family Outfitter  
 George Buxton - Billiards Pool and Bowling  
 Axel J. Roos - Painter and paper hanger  
 John Burkhart - Home Dressed Meats  
 Crouch and Hampson - Ford Automobiles  
 Haddad & Davis - Men's Furnishings  
 Wm. Greenlee - Staples and Fancy Groceries  
 Gessner's Department Store - Family Outfitter  
 Malakoff Brothers - Dept. Store and Meat Market  
 J. L. Brown - Groceries - Kitchenware  
 W. M. Johnson - Druggist  
 Farmers & Miners National Bank  
 Ferro's Theatre  
 C. S. Patterson - Furniture and Undertaking  
 L. E. Sands - Jeweler and Optician  
 First National Bank  
 The Rexall Store - S. F. Caldwell Ph. G.  
 Bentleyville Hardware Co.  
 Acme Bakery - James Stevenson  
 W. F. Richardson - Notary Public Fire Insurance  
 W. J. Wilson - Staple and Fancy Groceries  
 Morris Levine - Dry Goods  
 Acme Brewing Co.

Among the advertisements in the Centennial program you might have expected one for White's Flour and Saw Mill. Having been caught up by the rapid pace of the Bentleyville, I have nearly overlooked the passing of old friends. The old mill, dusty from a century of grinding, was torn down several years prior to the Centennial. "Pilgrim's Rest" became the site of the W. F. Richardson block. In its last years, Pete Jones had a restaurant in the log cabin section and William McTarry had his barber shop in the Bentley's home. Had the ghost of Sheshbazzar Bentley desired to visit our town in 1916, there would have been very few familiar scenes to make him feel at home. You can't help but wonder if he would be satisfied with what he saw. What would he think now? After all, the town was his idea.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The reader might wonder how and where I gathered the source material on "Bentleysville" and a real historian may question the results of my research; for them I will describe my adventure in history. It was a pleasant experience, and I



Miriam Anna Dartnell

will miss my excuse for telephoning and visiting the "dear friends and gentle people who live in my home town". This research results from a resolution to write down the stories about early Bentleyville, which, without a doubt, would in a few years be lost to future generations. After testing this idea on several friends, I sought the advice of Mrs. W. A. H. McIlvaine, the secretary of the Washington County Historical Society. She suggested interviewing residents over eighty and gave me a list of county histories. Later, when I needed information from our county court records, Mrs. McIlvaine abstracted this information gratis, from old deeds and wills.

I found most of these histories with the help of local librarians who were more than cooperative. Mrs. Charles Weir in our Bentleyville Public Library ordered several boxes of books from the State Library in Harrisburg; Miss Dorothy Reichard brought me more from the California State Teacher's College library; and Miss Rose Demarest in the Pennsylvania Room of the Carnegie Library contributed to my research and tracked down the "Bingville Bugle". The Library of Congress has a complete file of the "Bingville Bugle" and I was surprised to learn that the library will copy almost anything in their collection for a reasonable fee. An extensive search for the older books, that libraries do not lend out, could not have been more successful



than was my experience with fate. More than once I discovered valuable information in unlikely places. An example of this occurred when my family visited old friends in their home town of Rennerdale, Pennsylvania. Mr. Carl Kelly showed me a book that he had been given years ago by a man he met on a streetcar. This book was Doddridge's Notes, and it is our chief source for information about the pioneer life in southwestern Pennsylvania. In 1824, Dr. Doddridge made these notes on his childhood recollections: Another social visit with a former school teacher, Miss Rosetta Rodgers, and her brother, Wesley Rodgers, was the means of acquiring other valuable books. Many friends loaned me pictures and research material and never complained when I kept them many months. I am thinking of Mrs. Stanley Bell, Mrs. A. N. Booth, Mrs. R. P. Lippincott, Mrs. James McCune, Mr. J. V. Mitchell and Misses Margaret and Mildred Gamble. My most exciting discovery was Sheshbazzar Bentley's old papers and his wife's correspondence. These I found by inquiring of Miss Jean Stephens in Monongahela whether she had any family records. I was not prepared for the strong box and suitcase full of family correspondence and old papers that date back to 1790. After many days of eager reading my eyes became blood-shot from the effort of deciphering phonetic spelling and faded spidery scrawl. I read many letters that were written to Grandma Bentley and John W. Stephens but never any of the answers until Mr. Donald Darroch brought me several letters that Mrs. Bentley wrote to his mother-in-law, Lavinia Jones.

The most enjoyable and, at the same time, the most difficult part of my research was the personal interviews. It was hard to keep the interviews on subjects that had a place in this history. I learned that people quickly forget the details concerning public affairs like new school and churches, but the details of private scandals are not so quickly forgotten. I also learned to be suspicious about stories of events that occurred before the story-teller's lifetime. I was told that George Washington once stopped at Colonel William Wallace's home, but the reports of Washington's travels through this county do not substantiate this story. The best discovery I could not put in a history; it was the realization that these octogenarians had "a lot on the ball". I also questioned many younger residents who can remember Bentleyville before 1916. I can remember interviewing Mr. W. J. Wilson, Mrs. A. N. Booth, Mrs. John Harris, Mrs. Harry Bush, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Myers, Mr. Tom White, Mr. O. M. Frye, Mr. Clyde Dague, Mr. Joseph Nicholls, Mrs. Stanley Bell, Mr. Donald Darroch, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Ecburton, Mrs. John Myers, Mrs. John Wright, Mr. John Wright, Jr., Miss Ethel

Richardson, Mr. Stanley Caldwell, Mrs. Eva Schneider, Mr. Emory Snyder, Mrs. Harry McClain, Miss Blanche Snyder, Mrs. Sevilla Huffman, and Mr. and Mrs. Obediah Sprowls. There are a numbers of persons who have left Bentleyville but still remember with some pleasure the years they spent here. Some of these people who contributed to this work I have never met, and I know them only through their letters. These contributors were Mrs. Mary Piersol Bunker, Mrs. Harry Richardson, Mr. Albert Godfrey, Mrs. John Harris, Mrs. Harry Bane, Mrs. Arthur Frazier, Mr. Arthur Watkins, Mrs. Wayne Jones, Mrs. Joseph Emler, and Mrs. Marsh Ames.

Another phase of the research into Bentleyville's past was the evaluation of the information that was found on tombstones. The old stones give the names of the deceased person's parents, a practice that is neglected today, and the dates on the stones verify the time element of stories and events. Two boys, Charles Neff and Jeffrey Umbel copied all the vital statistics from the stones in the Newkirk cemetery, and they are anxious to see how they helped to write a book. On a wintry day, Mother and Mrs. Naomi Hampson got cold feet from a visit to the Monongahela Cemetery. Mrs. Frank Yenko showed us the old Bentley burying ground on the hillside behind her home.

I am indebted to Miss Sophia Nizinski—my typist, Miss Marie Wilson, Mrs. R. J. Hartzell, Mrs. A. T. Carr, Miss Rachel Mitchell, Father Thomas Walsh, Mrs. Roy Robison, Mr. Neal Daugherty, Mr. C. E. Ross and Mr. William Van Voorhis of Monongahela, Mr. Earle Forrest of Washington, Pa., Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Huffman, Mrs. Howard Dague and to Mr. G. J. Menego for his photographic work.

My friends know that I am unable to leave my home without assistance, and although Mother desires no mention here, I must acknowledge her constant willingness to drive me over the countryside, to bring my elderly friends to me, to poke around old cemeteries, to act as custodian of my material and to be an honest critic.

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